

LOON LAKE LODGE

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CHARACTERS

Cybil Braithewaite	grand dame, 90 years, ailing, feisty, charming, widow of the late, great Jason Braithewaite, O.B.E., wealthy financier, sportsman and war hero;
Arthur Braithewaite	son of Cybil and Jason, administers the failing family fortunes; age approximately 58;
Grace Braithewaite	his wife; sweet, long-suffering, plumpish;
Wilbert Braithewaite	known as Will, son of Arthur and Grace, age 23, ordinary, a dreamer;
Elenor Braithewaite	Arthur's sister, about six years younger, spinster, very trim and athletic, flat-chested, lives with her mother;
Sally Brown	Cybil's long-time servant
Barry Brown	her son; raised in Braithewaite household, athletic, age 22;
Alexis Beauregard	Arthur's secretary; buxom, approximately 45.

Time: August 1980

Place: Loon Lake

Act I	Scene One	one evening
	Scene Two	the next day
	Scene Three	later that afternoon
	Scene Four	that evening
Act II	Scene One	several days later
	Scene Two	the next day
	Scene Three	that afternoon
	Scene Four	that night

THE SET

The scene is the interior of a grand cottage on a wild northern lake. Walls are well-trimmed logs. Style is gothic, with arched windows, and structural arches supporting stair-way, etc. Projecting stage right is a porch, surrounded by a railing in the same gothic style. Projecting stage left and detached from the house is a plain platform, surrounded by trees, later to represent a dock. It is possible to walk between these two without appearing to re-enter the house, because the house is raised one step on the stage. The set has a second story, being a gallery which gives access to four bedrooms. The gallery is reached by a grand gothic stairway. The stairwell is rear stage left and the gallery runs around the rear of the stage. The walls of the bedrooms are cut away, but covered with scrim, so the audience can see in when indicated by lighting directions. Initially the audience sees the wood-hewn walls of the upper corridor. One bedroom slightly overhangs the porch stage right, and has a set of window-doors that open onto a small balcony on the roof of the porch.

Downstairs, there are two groups of furniture: a group of chairs, including a rocker, arranged semi-circle (around a roaring fireplace if possible) and second a grand dining table and chairs. The latter is stage left, set in front of a large window which looks out over the dock and the lake. Curtains should be closed at the beginning of the play.

Furnishings are ancient, numerous and comfortable. Style is rustic. Antlers, anglers trophies, old photos and the like. In a prominent place is a large photo of a handsome man wielding an axe, or portaging a canoe - something appropriately "Canadian". Also, a large bear skin is prominent on the walls, the sort that would have been a rug in other times.

Bedrooms and porch are also appropriately furnished - wicker, etc. There are numerous lamps onstage, and a large chandelier over the main seating group.

The general atmosphere should be that of a very full and orderly house. When lit by the numerous lamps, the effect should be dramatic, like a well-planned doll's house.

Ideally, the set should be behind a curtain, so that the full effect of the household will strike when the curtain rises.

In more modest productions, a set of platforms and balconies of no discernible geometric regularity would do. Absolutely spare furnishing featuring only the most essential props would be appropriate, eg., the portrait and the bear skin. Nothing in between seems appropriate.

MUSIC

Music plays an important part in setting the mood throughout the play.

Stage directions also indicate passages of the following music at various times:

Beethoven: Moonlight Sonata, 1st and 3rd movements

Chopin: Grand Valse Brillante

Prelude #7

Waltz in C-Sharp minor

Glen Miller

Loon Tape: This is an electronic composition containing actual sounds of the wild, especially loon calls, also thunder, etc., mixed with various artificial mood and percussive sounds. It will be revealed as a composition, or collection, of Will Braithewaite.

(Note: Readers ought to listen at least to the Moonlight Sonata before reading to remind themselves of that powerful and evocative mood.)

ACT I, Scene i

Prior to the curtain, we hear Chopin, Grand Valse Brillante; the curtain rises and we find...

Cybil Braithwaite, her daughter-in-law Grace, Sally Brown, Cybil's maid, Will Braithwaite, Grace's son, and Barry Brown, Sally's son, are seated centre stage.

Lighting is dim and dramatic.

Cybil is a very old lady, covered over in blankets, with her leg in a cast. She is feisty, charming, grand and witty. She constantly escapes the blankets to gesticulate as she talks, and Sally covers her over again.

Grace is a slightly plump, matronly person, knitting.

Sally is very plump, cheerful. Barry is very athletic and dressed in old fashioned white flannels and blue blazer. Will is dressed in denim.

Tea has been served.

Cybil is seated in the rocking chair. Two small free-standing stage lights on each side of her burn brightly, making her the dazzling centre of attention on stage. Will is fussing with a video camera mounted on a tripod, and a tape machine with a microphone which sits on the table beside Cybil.

CYBIL Is it on? Is it on? What do I say? Am I beautiful?

WILL Not yet, Nana, not yet. There. O.K.
Are you ready, Nana? This is your life.

CYBIL What do I say?

WILL Tell one of the stories.

CYBIL What stories?

WILL The stories you told me. You know. About Grandpa.

CYBIL About when we came to the lake?

WILL That's a good one. Ya. That's a good one.

GRACE Will is going to record it, mother. So we'll remember them. We can watch it on television.

CYBIL (puzzled) Is this a television camera?

BARRY That's it, Mrs. B! We're gonna make you a star!

CYBIL Oh, I've heard that one before. You men! You're all the same.

GRACE It's only for us, Mrs. B. Nobody else. Will is doing a collection.

SALLY You stop wrigglin' outa that blanket, Mrs. B. You'll catch another cold and that'll be the end of you.

CYBIL I want my hands to show.
(Sally fixes the blanket)

GRACE I'd like to hear about the visit by the Duke of Gloucester.

CYBIL He was Jason's friend from the Army. He came to Temagami. He sat right there. Oh, what a man he was! So gallant! It was before Sally came.

SALLY Long before me. I should've got here earlier then, eh?

BARRY You're always late for everything.

SALLY Oh hush. Jason, Mr. Braithewaite, never complained.

WILL Tell us about the Duke of Gloucester and the timber slide.

CYBIL "Once the Duke of Gloucester came to stay here. He was on an official tour of our Dominion and he came here for a 'backwoods holiday' as he called it. He was a friend of my late husband during the Great War, you see, and Jason invited him here for a holiday, during his tour.

He came without his servants. The Governor-General's man was sent back to Ottawa. They were personal friends. It was in 1924, I think, or '25. Long ago, children. Just after we built the lodge. My husband had told him during the war how wonderful it was at Loon Lake. Men talk a lot about those kind of things, when they're not fighting. At least, they used to. I don't know what they talk about now. He was such a charming man! Just a darling! And so grateful to get away from the tour! He said it was boring. I don't know why he did it if it was boring.

When I asked him, he said it was his job. A family responsibility. That's the way he talked. Really. That's the way it was in those days. He had a wife. But she stayed in England with the children. I never met her, but she sent me a lovely note that she wrote herself. I still have it.

...Should I read the note, Will?

WILL

I don't think so, Nana. Keep going.

CYBIL

The Duke was a great sportsman. Like my husband. They fished almost every day...in the canoe. I was so afraid something might happen to him. What would people say!? But he was a strong swimmer, so it was all right. Jason made him pass our swim test before he could go out in the canoe. Like everybody must. Even today. He was very good-natured about swimming to the raft and back. That's the test, isn't it? I think he even liked it when somebody else gave the orders. He liked Jason very much. But, the big adventure was going down the timber slide. They were still logging in those days. Not here on this lake, but up on Lady Evelyn. We paddled up there for two days, just the three of us. Jason thought two days was enough for the Duke, but he loved it. He would have stayed a week. And he loved my cooking. Everybody did. I was really very good at it, you know. Jason taught me.

SALLY You can't cook!

CYBIL We have a picture of the three of us leaving the dock.
Who took that picture, Sally?

SALLY Good Lord, how should I know? That was before my time.

CYBIL Frank Prendergast. He took the picture. He used to
come here for the summer to look after the boats.
He was a teacher at Ridley College. Jason liked him.
Anyhow, the Duke couldn't believe that I carried a pack
when we went on the portage. He thought it was terrible.
He was such a gentleman! But Jason insisted. That's
the way we travelled. I was an equal.
When we got to Lady Evelyn, we camped. Jason told him
the legend of the Windago. The Duke loved it. We stayed
up very late talking about the stars. He knew quite a
lot about astronomy which he studied at Cambridge. He was
such an interesting man. The next day we went to see the
timber slide. There were men logging. They knew Jason.
At first they didn't believe it was the Duke of Gloucester,
but one of them had been in the service and had seen him
during the war. We had a merry time. They showed the Duke
how the slide worked. He loved it, just loved it. You see,
there aren't any big trees left in England. And then,
they opened the sluice a little more so they could canoe
down the chute. It's very dangerous, but the men knew how.
And the Duke went down just hollerin' away. I've never
seen a man so happy. He said afterward he was the first
member of the Royal Family in the twentieth century to go
down the drain - but that we musn't tell anybody, or he
might be last. The men laughed. They came to the lodge
a couple of days later to see him off. They drank beer
down on the dock. Those were very grand times when Jason
was alive.

(Enter Elenor)

ELENOR (with nurse-like good cheer) Well, would you look at you mother! Performing under the lights. In your own living room. I thought you were in retirement!

GRACE Mother is recording her reminiscences - of the early days at the lake.

ELENOR Oh, those stories! Tell the one about Arthur getting the fish hook in his ear when he was five. Let's have that one on tape. He's always denying it.

BARRY In his ear!

CYBIL It's true! But he doesn't like the story, poor thing.

ELENOR Right through here. (indicating her ear lobe)

CYBIL You better be nice to Arthur. He gets all the money when I'm gone... if I ever go.

ELENOR But the lodge will be mine.

CYBIL Don't tease him!

ELENOR Aren't you tired mother?

WILL Tell about the first time you and grandpa came to the lake.

GRACE Let's make this the last one for tonight.

CYBIL If you're tired Elenor, why don't you go to bed?

ELENOR I'll be in the kitchen
(Exit Elenor. As she leaves, Cybil pushes the blanket off)

GRACE Will, why don't we do some more tomorrow? Those lights are very hot.

CYBIL That's why I don't need this damn blanket!

SALLY If Elenor catches you without that blanket, you'll
get the dickens! I'll get the Dickens!

CYBIL Who's the mother around here! If I didn't have this
fool cast on my leg, she wouldn't be...
(Will turns off the lights)

ELENOR (from off stage) Is everybody getting ready for bed?
(Sally attempts to cover Mrs. B. with the blankets again,
but she resists. Wills calls to the kitchen)

WILL All finished, Aunt Elenor. (with conspiratorial flourish)
"Quoth the raven, dreaded Elenor!"

SALLY I'll go get your bed ready, Mrs. B.

CYBIL Don't hurry! And...
(as Sally leaves) none of that damn Ovaltine!

WILL Tomorrow, let's do the wedding.

GRACE Oh, let's not Will darling. Your father will be here.
You know how that upsets him.

WILL He doesn't have to watch.

CYBIL We'll lock him in his room. Start my record again.
(Will does so; Moonlight Sonata plays softly)

GRACE He should be here soon.
(Cybil pays no attention as she listens to the music)

WILL I wonder what part of the country he sold to the Germans
this week?

GRACE He sells to the Japanese too, darling.

WILL Right, the Japanese.

GRACE Will, don't start on politics with him tonight.
You know it will just cause a scene.

WILL All right, all right. But you shouldn't let him get
away with it.

GRACE: But Will, I am an American. Besides, he is my husband.
(as the music passes a crescendo, Cybil sighs)

CYBIL Oh, play that part again. Play it again, Wilbert.
It's so beautiful.

WILL You really like that part don't you?

CYBIL (self-mocking, then serious) He swept me into his
arms, and we danced in the silvery moonlight, across the
waves, faster and faster. Marry me, he said, marry me,
and she did, she did. (Pause - trance) Oh Jason, Jason,
where are you? Where are you my darling?

WILL Nana, Nana...It's Will...Can you tell me more about Jason
tomorrow? Tomorrow we'll do some more.
(she seems to wake)

CYBIL He was a strong man. He protected me. He gave me everything.
I was such a lucky girl. When he drowned, I cried.

WILL I remember Nana. I remember. I was just little, but I remember.

CYBIL I'm not a modern woman. I like to be looked after.
He's in the lake Wilbert. He's in the lake. We scattered
his ashes in the lake.

WILL Me and Barry went with you, Nana. We were just little,
but we remember.

CYBIL Barry, you're my strong man now,...

BARRY Yes, ma'am.

CYBIL Take me on the porch so I can look at the stars.
I want to see the stars before I go to bed.

BARRY Mrs. B., it's getting cold out there. I don't think
I ought to. Elenor might not...

CYBIL What does she know. It's only a broken leg.

GRACE Barry doesn't want to get in trouble with Elenor, Mrs. B.

CYBIL Balls to Elenor. He'll get in trouble with me, if he
doesn't! Who do you work for? Who pays your tuition?
You want to go back to Yale or not!?
(he hesitates)
I'll wear the damn blanket! Pick me up!
(he picks her up; Grace and Will wrap Cybil in the blanket
in his arms)
I'm not so heavy, am I?

BARRY No, ma'am.

CYBIL (to Will) Start that record over again. And push it over
to the window.
(Will pushes it to the window, and Cybil continues)
When you get really old like me, it's all right to be
a little bit crazy - as long as your rich. And I'm still rich.

GRACE (joking) Oh, stop it.

BARRY You comfortable?

CYBIL How long can you hold me?

BARRY As long as you want.

CYBIL Good, now squeeze me. (She rubs her face on his cheek)
Start the music. (Will does. Barry carries her outside
to the porch where they stand in the stillness).

WILL She's incorrigible!

GRACE Barry is very good to her. I hope he doesn't mind.

WILL He really likes her. He doesn't mind.
(Sally re-enters)

SALLY Where'd she go? Where'd she go?
(Will indicates the phonograph)
Did he take her out on the porch again? I'm gonna give
that boy a lickin'.

WILL She made him do it, Sally. She made him. No nooky
by the lake, no tuition.

GRACE It's all right for a little while. She's all covered up.
She'll be ninety years old tomorrow. It's okay. Ninety!
In just a few minutes.

ELENOR (from off stage) Is mother in bed? Is mother in bed?
It's almost eleven-thirty.
(before she enters, Will turns phonograph so it faces
into room. Elenor enters)
Where's mother?

WILL Well, ah, I already took her up to bed. Sally looked
after her. Isn't that right, Sally?

SALLY That's right. She's all looked after. Sleeping
peaceful as a baby.

ELENOR Good, good. Why don't you make some more tea? (Elenor sits)

SALLY Yes, ma'am. (Sally exits)

ELENOR Where's Barry?

GRACE Oh, he went to bed early. He's training. I'll wait
up for Arthur, but I don't mind if you all turn in.

ELENOR I'm not tired. Arthur should be here very soon.
I want to speak to him about the docks. They really are in dreadful condition. We've got to get Harrison to work on them soon or he'll be booked up for the rest of the season. You know how slow things are up here.

GRACE All in good time, Elenor. All in good time.

ELENOR The old tightwad just doesn't want to pay up for the dock, that's what it is. I know him.

GRACE I'm sure it's just a cash flow problem.
(she says "cash flow" quizzically, obviously an expression she has heard as an excuse in the past but doesn't quite understand)

ELENOR (getting up) Oh, there are some lights down at the boat shed now. The lord of the manor has arrived.
(shouting to Sally in the kitchen) Sally, more tea, and biscuits, and a bottle of rum. He is arriving.

GRACE Now, you two be nice to him, maybe he had a hard week.

WILL He always has a hard week. The Germans drive a hard bargain.

GRACE Now you remember, no politics.

ARTHUR (off stage) Hello...hello...whose up?

ELENOR Yes, wait until tomorrow to tell him he's a running dog of the Yankee imperialists. And a traitor to the true people of the North.

WILL I never said that!

ELENOR Yes, I know you didn't, darling. I heard it on the radio. But I'm sure you will.

GRACE Hello...we're in the front room.

(Enter Arthur; Alexis following behind him. She is quite nervous; Arthur is full of nervous cheer. Quiet horror at the sight of Alexis. Grace quickly regains composure)

ARTHUR

Well, well, well...everybody still up?

Where's mother. It's almost her birthday. (looking at his watch)

Come in Alexis. Come in. You know everybody.

Elenor, Will, Grace. Where's Barry?

(Sally enters with a tray)

GRACE

Please sit down, Alexis. (She does)

ARTHUR

Ah, Sally, old girl. You know Alexis, my assistant.

A fresh plate of goodies. Marvellous.

GRACE

You're awfully cheerful. Have a good week?

ARTHUR

Quite good, actually. Finished off that Manitoba deal.

And we have a great lead on some Germans who want land,

and lots of it. I think we can finally unload that

Kenora property.

WILL

You're selling that to some Germans.

ARTHUR

It's an inflation hedge. They don't care if it's
a mosquito farm.

WILL

That's sacred land to the Cree!

ARTHUR

Well, it's an inflation hedge to the Germans. Sorry,
Little Bleeding Heart. (Grace motions to Will not to continue)

GRACE

(to Alexis) I hope he hasn't been working you too hard
my dear.

ALEXIS

(very nervous, but managing some good cheer) Oh, I can
manage him.

ELENOR

Well if you can, you're better than the rest of us.

GRACE You should make him give you the weekends off.
It's not fair to drag you up here.

ARTHUR I thought Alexis could help with mother.

ELENOR Oh, that's so thoughtful of you Arthur. But I wouldn't
want to ruin her weekend with bedpans and sponge baths.

ARTHUR She used to be a nurse you know.

GRACE Before you went into business. How interesting. Have
some tea, my dear. But really, Arthur, you shouldn't be
expecting Alexis to be on call to help with your problems
all the time. She'll quit on you Arthur, if you make too
many demands. We just won't let him bother you this weekend.

ALEXIS I don't mind, really.

 (Arthur notices phonograph over by the window.
 He goes to it and turns music off)

CYBIL (from the porch) Who turned my music off?

ELENOR I thought she went to bed? (Barry enters with Cybil)

BARRY Ah...hello, Mr. Braithewaite.

ARTHUR Mother, are you still up? How's the leg? Barry, good
to see you! Back for a summer break? I hear you're the
new star of the Yale hockey team. Canadian boy makes good
down there. Shows we really count for something.

ELENOR Did you make Barry take you out on the porch, mother?
What did you tell him?
(to Barry) I told you not to listen to her when she tells
you foolish things.

CYBIL (teasing) It's okay, Barry. Don't listen to her.
It's my money. Now put me down.

SALLY Would you like to go to bed, ma'am?

CYBIL No, I wouldn't like to go to bed. My only son Arthur Gloucester Braithewaite has just arrived at my summer home on a beautiful August night. The lamps are lit. Tea has been served. The family has gathered around. And I do not want to go to bed. So, Barry, put me down. (he does)
And put on another record.
(Barry does - Grand Valse Brillante)

ARTHUR Well, mother, you seem in fine form! What do we have to do to slow you down? Break the other leg?

GRACE Arthur!

CYBIL That was his little joke, dear. You've only been with us thirty years, and you still haven't learned about our little jokes!

SALLY Well, who will have some tea? (She pours)

CYBIL How was business, Arthur? Was it a good week?
How was the market?

ARTHUR (Gets out some liquor to spike his tea) Well, the market in Toronto was up and the market in New York was down. So we - the firm - got a lot of orders from head office. Lots of money. Swimming in it. So, "they're" all quite happy.

CYBIL I don't think we ever should have sold the firm to those people.

ARTHUR That was a long time ago, mother. It was a good deal. They paid cash. Kept you in splendor.

CYBIL Jason wouldn't have sold it.

ARTHUR Let's not discuss that tonight. Mother, do you remember Alexis Beauregard? My assistant.

CYBIL How do you do, my dear. I hope you'll forgive an old lady who's almost ninety but I can't remember you from Adam. (all laugh) That is the privilege of being old.

ALEXIS It's my pleasure, again.

ARTHUR Alexis is a nurse too.

CYBIL Does she look after you Arthur?

ARTHUR I thought she might help look after you.

CYBIL Me..I've got Sally. Well, we could try her out. But what will you do Arthur?

ARTHUR I'll manage. I'll manage.

GRACE But not this weekend, Arthur. It wouldn't be fair to Alexis. She's been working all week. She needs a break.

CYBIL Yes, yes. Well, now, what I want to know, is it midnight yet? Is it midnight? At midnight I turn into a fairy princess.

WILL (aside to Barry) And you turn into a toad!

GRACE Yes, it's now midnight.

SALLY Happy birthday, Mrs. B.

ALL (sing) Happy Birthday to you... etc.

CYBIL I always knew I'd make it to ninety.

ELENOR You'll live for a long, long time yet, mother.

BARRY There isn't a germ alive that could kill you, Mrs. B.

CYBIL Oh, my handsome prince. Just in time! (all laugh)

GRACE (rises and gets a parcel from beneath the stairs)
I was going to save this for breakfast. But why not now.
Happy Birthday, Mrs. B. (hugs her)

CYBIL It's so big.
(Alexis immediately muscles in beside Cybil to help her open the box. She pulls a pen knife from her purse to cut the ribbons. Elenor and Grace draw back when they see the knife.)

ALEXIS Let me help.

CYBIL (oblivious) Oh yes, thank you. I think it's a hat.
It looks like a hat box. I think so. (to Grace) Is it a hat?
(box is finally opened) It is a hat!

ELENOR Oh mother, it's beautiful. (Alexis puts it on her head.
It is a large broad-brimmed hat with paper flowers)

CYBIL Oh, it's lovely. I feel so young. Am I beautiful my handsome prince?

BARRY Yes ma'am.

CYBIL You see what happens at midnight. I told you.

BARRY I never doubted for a moment, Mrs. B.

ARTHUR What's all this stuff? (motioning to the lights and video camera)

GRACE Will was recording your mother's stories of the early days at the lodge. On video.

ARTHUR A companion piece to the loon tapes.

CYBIL I'm going to be a star!

WILL Yes, so we will always have Nana with us.

ALEXIS You're making a movie? Here?

WILL Television.

CYBIL It's more modern dear. Will, let's do my poem, right now.

ELENOR No, mother, you have to go to bed. It's after midnight.

CYBIL I'm ninety years old. I can stay up as late as I want.

ARTHUR What do you think, Alexis?

ALEXIS A little longer won't hurt.

ARTHUR There. Let's hear the poem.

WILL All right.

CYBIL I like to have the music when I tell this story. It goes
with the story. Will? Should I recite my poem?
Is this a good place for the poem?

WILL Sure.

(Cybil motions to Alexis to take the hat off)

CYBIL Are you ready?

WILL We're rolling.

CYBIL Where are my notes? Oh, never mind. I can remember!
Should I start?

WILL Any time.

GRACE You're not Lauren Bacall

CYBIL She was a nice girl.
(pause for drama - she recites well)

"I see you wild man,
I see you great Kanipi.
I see you at last,
stare into your gaping maw,
grinding your teeth, vastness, blackness,
twisted gullet.

I hear you earth monster,
 those tiny voices deep inside,
 whimpering,
 the peeling thunder roaring,
 throwing your elemental violence.
 So I am welcomed.
 I feel you Kanipi,
 cold naked tongue in my gut.
 I know your intentions,
 they are legend,
 others have been here,
 you may know that,
 make men mere mortals,
 make mortals fearful,
 that they should pass away.
 We were told that Kanipi
 but still we came,
 and presented ourselves at your shore.
 Devour me, beast, this I dare.
 This is not suicide,
 we swim well.
 Test me.
 We dive into your bowels, Kanipi,
 into your heart,
 into your soul.
 Here we are happy.
 With my friend I make a home here,
 here inside you,
 and make love upon your rock.
 (a pause)

WILL That's beautiful, Nana. Really beautiful.

SALLY Oh, Mrs. B! You and your poems.

CYBIL I was almost an English professor.

BARRY I can dig it! I can dig it!

GRACE That was lovely Mrs. B.

ELENOR Mother, you're amazing. Could the handsome prince
 carry you up to bed now?
 (Sally starts clearing dishes and exits to kitchen).

CYBIL Oh, yes, just like always. Put on my hat.
 (Alexis makes a move to do so, but Elenor outmanoeuvres
 her, and puts the hat on Cybil. Barry picks her up.
 The hat has to be adjusted because it's in Barry's eyes.)
 Good night, everybody. And don't wait for us in the morning.
 (They all laugh. Barry, Cybil and Elenor exit upstairs into
 one of the central bedrooms.)

ELENOR And Arthur, tomorrow I want to talk to you about the dock.
 We really must get some work done.

ARTHUR Tomorrow we'll talk about money all day long. Don't you fret little sister, don't you fret.

GRACE And I shall put Arthur to bed.
(Grace takes his hand firmly. There is some resistance as Arthur looks at Alexis, but he gives in.)
Come along, Arthur, you've had a hard week.
(to Alexis) Sally will show you to your room, Alexis.
(Exit Grace and Arthur up the stairs after Cybil et al, into another bedroom. Sally re-enters).

SALLY (to Alexis) Oh, are you still here, dear. Gawd. We better find you a bunk somewhere. Give a hand with the cups here.
(She hands Alexis some dishes, and heads for kitchen again)
Come along. You can sleep on my sofa in the cabin.
It's comfie enough.
(Alexis does a slow burn and follows. Exit. Will is left alone on stage. He turns off and moves the stage lights and starts a tape of loon calls. He turns off most of the lamps and flops on the sofa. Barry comes back downstairs. He comes up behind Will.)

BARRY Just when I get one set of loons put to bed you turn on another!

WILL Turn on! Turn on! Did I hear the magic words?

BARRY Your old man's got nerves of steel! Imagine bringing his mistress home for the weekend! (Barry is rolling a joint)

WILL I thought we were going to have blood on the ceiling.
(Unnoticed to the two boys, Elenor has come out of one room and is passing down the upper balcony as they speak.)

BARRY High drama!
(Will and Barry speaking in mock radio announcer voices)

WILL Will Arthur release the trust funds from his father's vast estate so his wicked sister Elenor can fix the dock?

BARRY Will the ever faithful Sally run out of Ovaltine?

WILL Will Cybil buy back the family firm from the barons of Wall Street?

BARRY Who will get Cybil's money?

ARTHUR Tomorrow we'll talk about money all day long. Don't
you fret little sister, don't you fret.

GRACE And I shall put Arthur to bed.
(Grace takes his hand firmly. There is some resistance
as Arthur looks at Alexis, but he gives in.)
Come along, Arthur, you've had a hard week.
(to Alexis) Sally will show you to your room, Alexis.
(Exit Grace and Arthur up the stairs after Cybil et al,
into another bedroom. Sally re-enters).

SALLY (to Alexis) Oh, are you still here, dear. Gawd. We better
find you a bunk somewhere. Give a hand with the cups here.
(She hands Alexis some dishes, and heads for kitchen again)
Come along. You can sleep on my sofa in the cabin.
It's comfie enough.
(Alexis does a slow burn and follows. Exit. Will is left
alone on stage. He turns off and moves the stage lights and
starts a tape of loon calls. He turns off most of the lamps
and flops on the sofa. Barry comes back downstairs.
He comes up behind Will.)

BARRY Just when I get one set of loons put to bed you turn on another!

WILL Turn on! Turn on! Did I hear the magic words?

BARRY Your old man's got nerves of steel! Imagine bringing his
mistress home for the weekend! (Barry is rolling a joint)

WILL I thought we were going to have blood on the ceiling.
(Unnoticed to the two boys, Elenor has come out of one room
and is passing down the upper balcony as they speak.)

BARRY High drama!
(Will and Barry speaking in mock radio announcer voices)

WILL Will Arthur release the trust funds from his father's vast
estate so his wicked sister Elenor can fix the dock?

BARRY Will the ever faithful Sally run out of Ovaltine?

WILL Will Cybil buy back the family firm from the barons of Wall Street?

BARRY Who will get Cybil's money?

WILL Tune in next week

BARRY When Elenor says...

ELENOR That's not very funny.
(Barry and Will embarrassed)

BARRY Sorry Elenor.
(Elenor continues into her room. They watch her disappear)

WILL When Elenor says...that's not very funny. (flopping onto sofa)

BARRY Where's that joint?

WILL Why don't you take off your handsome prince costume?
(Barry takes off his white jacket. Will gets out the joint
to light. They smoke. Will switches on the tape to
Moonlight Sonata.)
Your mother took Alexis to her cabin to sleep on the sofa!

BARRY She didn't know they could fight dirty.

WILL She can look after herself. With the knockers on her, I'm
surprised she didn't fall over.

BARRY I saw her teetering.

WILL I know what I'll do. I'll sell the loons to the Italians.
And the beavers to the Roumanians. The water to the Americans,
and the rocks to the Russians. And the moon to the...Zulus!
Then I'll live in Florida, and watch "The News from Canada"
on Cable T.V. It comes in kind of snowy, but it will remind
me of something...money.

BARRY Your old man'll want a cut. (Barry reaches out and takes
Will's hand).

WILL Did we have to send you to Yale to figure that out?

BARRY Probably. Do you know what the old lady was doin' outside?
I took her down to the dock. Don't tell nobody that.

WILL I won't tell "anybody".

BARRY She got down on the dock, and there was a loon singing out in the lake. And she called out to it. She can still do a loon call pretty good. So the old loon calls back. And she calls back. They talk back and forth for fifteen minutes. All different calls. Like they knew each other. It was something else! Then the loon went away. And you know what she says to me. She says "That was Jason". No shit. "That was Jason".

WILL She is really full of it. Boy, she really loved the guy.

BARRY I would too. Look at all the loot he left her.

WILL Don't be cynical.

BARRY That's not cynical. That's the truth. You don't know about that kind of truth.

WILL So what did the Bruins say?

BARRY I'm invited to their camp when I'm finished school next year. That's all. No guarantees.

WILL (they hug) My blood brother makes good!

BARRY I thought you'd be mad. Selling out to the Yankees!

WILL Hockey will always be Canadian. Even in Atlanta!

BARRY I like the money.

WILL Don't get me wrong. I hope you break your leg. I don't want you in Boston all winter. I want you back here. I miss you.

BARRY Do you know how much I could make?

WILL Filthy Lucre!

BARRY You can be a snob about it!

WILL I'm sorry. You're right. Money makes the world go round. But what if you meet some girl?

BARRY What are the chances?

WILL I don't know. (Barry puts his arm around him) You've got tendencies.

BARRY We're priority buds, right?

WILL God I love you, you dumb brute. (Barry playfully twists his arm until Will winces).

BARRY I'm not a dumb brute anymore. I'm a smart guy. Ivy League. Class act. Top draw. Got it?

WILL You're still a backwoods faggot.

BARRY You like it.

WILL Ah...ah...I like it. I like it.

(A playful wrestle fades to an embrace. Lights fade. Unknown to Will and Barry, Elenor watches from the upper balcony. Moonlight Sonata surges louder as lights out, then fades to silence as scene ends.)

ACT I, Scene ii

This scene is a series of conversations mainly involving Arthur and others; all characters should take places indicated:

Grace sits on verandah stage right;

Will, Barry and Cybil are on the dock stage left;
Cybil sits in a deck chair; they have with them
a portable tape deck. Barry watches a little portable T.V.

Sally sits at the dining room table;

Alexis sits in the far corner of the main room;

Elenor sits in the balcony window stage right, in a straw hat,
reading;

It is a glorious sunny afternoon. Grace is seated on the
verandah knitting. Arthur enters, drink in hand.
Moonlight Sonata has faded out to Chopin, Grand Valse Brillante.

For the brief periods between the remaining segments of this
scene, we hear a few bars from Moonlight Sonata, 3rd movement.
The actual passages need not be sequential, rather selected
for dense, compelling building crescendo in that movement.

Grace starts the scene as the same sweet lady we met
previously, but shows a different side as things progress.

GRACE	Barry is a nice boy. He's like a brother to Wilbert.
ARTHUR	Ah, yes, a brother.
GRACE	Your mother dotes on him.
ARTHUR	She's got quite batty. She thinks he's Jason.
GRACE	You haven't seen the worst of it. Thursday, she gave him your father's old rowing shirt to wear. He's so patient with her.
ARTHUR	He gets free tuition and a car.
GRACE	He's really good to her.
ARTHUR	She can't afford him.
GRACE	Yes, she can. (pause) Do you need more money?

ARTHUR Why do you ask?

GRACE I could write a cheque, you know. All you have to do is ask.

ARTHUR You know I'll tell you.

GRACE We don't need to scrimp.

ARTHUR That's very generous of you.

GRACE Well, why don't you get the launch fixed. And the dock. Really Arthur.

ARTHUR Why should we fix the damn launch for Elenor?
Why should I fix the launch for Elenor?

GRACE Because I use the launch too, on occasion.

ARTHUR Why should you give her a free ride?

GRACE We can't cut her off.

ARTHUR I can.

GRACE I won't. She's been here every summer of her life.

ARTHUR I know that. Every summer of my life she torments me. Belittles me. Ridicules me. She has nothing else to do. Nobody to love, and only me to hate.

GRACE That's unfair. I won't hear it. I will invite her. What would people think? Just because she swims better than you do. She's teasing you, Arthur. Just teasing.

ARTHUR She's vicious!

GRACE Well, I want the boat fixed. I want the dock fixed. I'll give you a cheque before you leave. You can take it to Mr. O'Dyer on Monday.

ARTHUR I hate going to Mr. O'Dyer.

GRACE It's in Daddy's will.

ARTHUR

I won't fix the boat. That's ridiculous.

GRACE

Arthur, darling, I hate to be firm. But sometimes I must. I have supported your family for twenty years and allowed you the luxury of telling the world you are the breadwinner in the family. It's our little secret. Your mother thinks she's a wealthy woman. And remember, you asked for it that way, when those silly mining companies went under. I told you not to invest in them.

ARTHUR

All right, all right! Let's not start that again. I've heard it before. I know what you're going to say! And they weren't silly. They were a good investment. Just bad luck.

GRACE

Well, your bad luck has cost me a great deal of money. And I don't mind. Really, I don't. But in return, I don't think it is unfair to expect certain things. That my wishes on certain matters be respected.

ARTHUR

Whatever you say. But not Elenor.

GRACE

I will not tolerate your ancient rivalry with your sister. It is too late in life. I don't like fighting. I want you to fix the boat the way she wants.

ARTHUR

Don't waste your money, Grace. I can't stand it.

GRACE

It's my money! And I want you to fix the boat. I will give you a cheque tomorrow. Anyhow, you'll need money to give to Barry for tuition soon.

ARTHUR

Oh yes, tuition. The best kept gigolo in Temagami.

GRACE

Arthur!

ARTHUR

That kid hasn't done a stroke of real work in three years.

GRACE

His mother is very loyal. Besides, it's only two more years. And I want you to be gracious about it. Tell him you're proud of him. You're the only father he knows.

ARTHUR In two years he'll be making \$80,000. a year playing stickball for the Boston Bruins. And we're - you're - giving him money! The kid will never learn the value of a dollar.

GRACE Not me, Arthur. Your mother. Your mother is paying his tuition. Remember that! As a favour to his mother, Sally Brown, her trusted and loyal servant for thirty years. Mrs. Braithewaite is doing it for her dear friend Mrs. Brown. And Mrs. Brown is very grateful. To your mother. And so is Barry. To your mother. That's the way I want it.

ARTHUR Yes, and I'm just the errand boy. Nobody ever thinks of me!

GRACE Why should they thank you? It's not your money.

ARTHUR But I'm the trustee of father's estate! I do all the worrying about the investments. I inherit all this money - to administer for the general welfare of the family. You'd think people would be a little more considerate of my feelings.

GRACE Arthur, there is no money. You lost it. Besides, you don't do anything except put my cheque in your mother's trust account and write another with your signature on it. So why be resentful because they're not grateful to you for something they ought to think you do but which you do not.

ARTHUR Nobody in this family knows the value of a dollar.

GRACE And you do because you've lost so many of them! Arthur, I will not tolerate your ingratitude to me. I deserve more. I have given you everything. Be gracious to your family. They have become accustomed to a certain style even if they can't afford it. I have no reason to disturb that. However much you might wish to punish them for your private reasons. And I will not disturb them unless it is absolutely necessary. And it is not.

ARTHUR All right, all right. (Arthur leaves and goes down to the dock, lights dim on Grace; music as Arthur crosses the stage and lights up on dock - Will, Barry & Cybil)

Barry sits on the dock watching a portable T.V., Screen is not visible to the audience, but we hear a sports announcer describing a football game. Some reference to an early season game. It is late August. Cybil sits in an old-fashioned deck chair. She has on a shawl and her new hat which she takes off after getting involved in conversation with Arthur. She also has a microphone hung round her neck. Will is monitoring her on a small tape machine. She has a few cards in front of her which she looks at occasionally when she speaks.

At first Will notices his father, but Cybil doesn't. She goes on speaking. Arthur stops and listens. Barry turns down T.V. as Cybil speaks.

CYBIL

The other great storm I remember was in the wintertime. You didn't know that, did you. Jason and I used to come here in the winter. We'd cross the lake on snowshoes from the landing. When I was young. It was such fun. We'd put the great fire on. And the stove in the kitchen. Sleep in the main room. The sky in the winter! Oh, Will, you should have seen the sky. So dark and pure. The stars were brighter in that blackness, they had more sparkle. Jason used to say that the cold world was cleaner. That's true. And in the daytime, just the opposite; glittering white, blinding on a sunny day. We'd wear our sunglasses. Imagine that, in the wintertime, we'd wear our sunglasses.

BARRY

Yea, it's nice here in the winter. Once I skated clear across the lake.

ARTHUR

I was never here in the winter.

CYBIL

(without turning around) Oh, yes you were. Once as a baby. You don't remember, but you were here. But after that we had to get a nurse for you. It was too much to bring everybody up here. You were so frail.

ARTHUR

Actually, it sounds perfectly beastly, if you'll pardon the English. I'd rather go to Florida.

CYBIL Oh yes, that was nice too, before it got so crowded with old people, if you know what I mean. It used to be frowned upon, before the war, "going south" not quite "loyal " to the king and all.

WILL Mother and father go to Florida all the time.

CYBIL Well, that's different. Grace is an American. She only lives here.

ARTHUR For thirty years.

CYBIL You can't expect her to stay in Toronto for the wintertime... they don't have the blood for it.

WILL I'm polluted by Yankee blood!

BARRY You're not pure. I'm pure.

ARTHUR Well, I'm as Canadian as you are mother, and I like Florida.

CYBIL But you were frail as a child.

ARTHUR Frail as a child has nothing to do with it. I wish you'd stop talking about that.

WILL I've got to come up this winter and get that howling wind for my tape. It'll go great with the loons and wolves.

BARRY And the crickets!

WILL Not the crickets!

CYBIL What's that?

WILL I'm going to come this winter, Nana.

ARTHUR Will is recording all the great sounds of the north on his German tape machine and Japanese tape. When his great work is done, I'm going to sell it to an Amercian record company in Hollywood, owned by an Arab.

WILL To the Italians!

CYBIL A record! Of the loons?

ARTHUR Yes. What do you think of that?

CYBIL That would be nice. But why would an Arab want to listen to that? They don't have any loons in the desert.

WILL Father is going to sell the loons to the Arabs.

CYBIL Arthur, you have no pride.

ARTHUR (aside to Will) I'm going to get you for that one.
(to Cybil) He was joking mother. He was joking. Loons are too greasy. They're no good to eat. The Arabs don't want them.

WILL Everything has it's price.

ARTHUR Even though you don't believe that it's true.

CYBIL Arthur, come here. I have something to tell you.

ARTHUR Yes.

CYBIL Arthur, I want you to give Sally a cheque for me. I've raised her pay. Starting January last.

ARTHUR January!

CYBIL Don't you think that's long enough?

ARTHUR Why raise it at all?

CYBIL But I've been sick. And this damn leg. I'm no fun to look after.

ARTHUR Barry, why don't you go get me a club soda.

BARRY Don't you want me to hear this?

ARTHUR Yale has been too good for your mind.

CYBIL He doesn't need to go anywhere. We're not going to discuss anything. I've raised her pay. To \$900.00. Please look after it. And get the boat fixed. Elenor has been complaining about it for weeks. She's driving me crazy. I don't need to live like a pauper. Your father promised I would be well taken care of.

ARTHUR I'm vividly aware of that. But, mother, you're not that rich.

CYBIL Well, I'm rich enough to have the boat fixed. And that's all we need to worry about today.

WILL I'm going to set up the video. Nana, we'll tape some more in a little while.

CYBIL Let's do the wedding.

WILL (to Barry) You coming?

BARRY Na. I'm going to swim again. Then I'll bring your grandmother up.

ARTHUR What wedding?

CYBIL Your wedding at Loon Lake Lodge. It's part of my memoirs.

ARTHUR That's my private business.

CYBIL No, it's not. You're my baby.

WILL And I'm going to sell that one to the Arabs!

(Exit Will, Arthur following, chasing him. A little more interlude music. Lights fade on Barry and Cybil)

(Will runs right through the house and disappears; Arthur enters after he has disappeared and goes up the stairs. Elenor comes out of her room and they meet on the stairs; they converse on the landing and come down the stairs together.)

ELENOR What are you rushing about for?

ARTHUR I'm looking for...never mind!

ELENOR Come sit on the porch. I want to talk to you.

ARTHUR I'm busy.

ELENOR What set you off?

ARTHUR We've got to stop this nonsense! Filming mother's fantasies!

ELENOR She enjoys it. What's the harm?

ARTHUR What if somebody sees it? Or believes it!

ELENOR Oh, the fish hook in the ear! Don't worry Arthur dear,
it will keep you on your toes.

ARTHUR There are too many dreamers in this fool country as it is.

ELENOR I hate to sound like your wife...but...a little sentiment
never hurt anyone. Will is a good boy.

ARTHUR Elenor, I might as well tell you now. I'm asking Alexis
to stay here and then to come back to the city with mother
to look after her there.

ELENOR Grace mentioned that. But, Arthur, don't you need her at
the office?

ARTHUR Alexis is a nurse. Mother needs special care. I worry about her.

ELENOR Well, why don't you just try looking after the old girl for
ten minutes. She has a mind of her own. It's not so easy.

ARTHUR Alexis is a nurse.

ELENOR I was a field sergeant in the army in England, France,
Holland and Germany. I know how to give orders. She still
won't listen.

ARTHUR Oh, I know that, but Alexis is experienced. She'll be with
mother all the time. She's not family. She's not so easy
to push around.

ELENOR Now it's you who is the dreamer. Mother will not take orders from anybody. Arthur, the convenience to you of having Alexis around all the time is transparent to all.

ARTHUR If you had been doing your job, she wouldn't have broken her leg.

ELENOR Of all the nerve! What do you expect? That I should lock her in her room. She knew the dock was dangerous and she went down there. She was quite mobile, you know. If you had got the dock fixed as I asked a hundred times there wouldn't have been any accident. Don't try and put the blame on me. If it wouldn't cause a scene, I'd sue you to have you removed as trustee. You haven't done anything right in that department for years.

ARTHUR And I suppose you could do better.

ELENOR Of course I could. It wouldn't be hard.

ARTHUR Oh God, here we go! You think it's easy. You think money grows on trees.

ELENOR There's plenty of money on the Braithewaite tree. You can't even manage to count it when it falls to the ground.

ARTHUR You don't even know what you're talking about.

ELENOR Father suffered his sole lapse of judgement when he made you executor of his will. You may be trustee, but you are not God. I may never get a penny but I know mother will appoint the lodge to me. And when she does, I will take great pleasure in showing you the door.

ARTHUR But dear Elenor, who will pay the bills?

ELENOR You are such a wimp. Even at the age of fifty-two, I believe I could break every bone in your body.

ARTHUR Listen to you! Listen to her. Still threatening to beat me up. You always did fancy yourself a tough broad, didn't you?

ELENOR Not at all. It's just that threats of physical violence work so effectively with you.

ARTHUR Don't be mean to me or I won't fix the boat.

ELENOR That's cheap blackmail.

ARTHUR Poor Grace. She loved it here so.

ELENOR She can stay.

ARTHUR But she wouldn't want to leave me alone in the big city.

ELENOR Grace's tolerance of your affairs is a wonder of the modern world.

ARTHUR I have to work to make a living. Grace understands that.

ELENOR You don't need to bring your office tart into the family home. That is arrogant beyond belief.

ARTHUR I didn't think anybody here noticed a thing I did! Or cared. Alexis is here as a nurse.

ELENOR For whom?

ARTHUR Such sarcasm!

ELENOR Grace may be indulgent with you, but I warn you, when this place is mine, that strumpet goes out on her fat ass.

ARTHUR Is there any ass in your closet, sister dear?

(Elenor storms off; more music)

(Alexis comes out of an upstairs bedroom)

ALEXIS That wasn't pretty.

ARTHUR I didn't expect it to be easy.

ALEXIS That's not what you planned to say.

ARTHUR The only thing I planned to do, darling, was give them hell.
(they embrace)

ALEXIS Oh, my dear, when will it be over? I can't go on like this.

ARTHUR I don't deserve you. I don't. Really, I don't.
I'm too old to fall in love. It's...it's...
(Arthur is about to drink, but Alexis pushes the glass
from his lips)

ALEXIS Don't question it. Accept it. Accept it. It only means
we have less time. But it will be more beautiful.

ARTHUR I was dying to tell her...sister dearest, the lodge will be
mine and the money, alas, is yours.

ALEXIS She knows!

ARTHUR About mother's new will?

ALEXIS No.

ARTHUR About us?

ALEXIS Yes, about us!

ARTHUR Of course she does. She's no fool.

ALEXIS Did you tell her?

ARTHUR Of course not. I didn't need to. I imagine Grace knows as well.

ALEXIS Arthur! How could you bring me here?

ARTHUR You're mother's nurse, remember. You work here. And in the city.
You have a principle responsibility to watch over the dowager
empress. Besides, I can't afford to keep that apartment.
Mr. O'Dyer is not altogether stupid. You have to move in
with mother. That's the only way I can keep you for now.
Don't worry.

ALEXIS But it's Grace's money!

ARTHUR She won't say anything. As long as I'm available for the odd dinner party. That's all that matters to her.

ALEXIS But if she knows...

ARTHUR Don't worry. She will play dumb rather than have a scene.

ALEXIS I don't like this. I love you Arthur, but this is madness. Isn't there another way?

ARTHUR Don't worry, I tell you. It really doesn't matter to Grace as long as I put in a good show now and then at her affairs. That's all she cares about. She's been paying your salary for years. She doesn't care. It's the show that matters, that's all...just the show. She never married any person in particular, she bought the Braithewaite name, that's all. If she loved anybody, it was my father. She's not even worried because she thinks I can't afford to leave her. But I'm going to prove that's wrong, damn her, damn them all. She'll hang on till the last thread of hope is gone. She won't object until after I'm out the door. She can't even imagine how to get a man. She may have lost fifty pounds, but she's still got the soul of a fat girl.

ALEXIS But I don't want to be here.

ARTHUR I want you here. I need you. I love you.
I need you to watch mother.

ALEXIS Arthur, I do love you, but isn't there another way...to get the money?

ARTHUR It won't be long. Mother can't last long. I've got the new will with me. I'll get her to sign it.

ALEXIS But what if she tells?

ARTHUR If she tells Elenor, it doesn't matter. Elenor will be thrilled. She'll think she's won a great victory. She'd gladly trade the lodge for the money. Any day. She'll tell mother "that's okay"! Won't she be shocked when I turn over the trust accounts on the day of reckoning! But she can never see them while I'm trustee. It would only matter if Grace found out. She knows...god does she know... there's no money in the Braithewaite accounts. But mother will never tell Grace. Mother still thinks Grace is a poor little farm girl. So does Elenor.

ALEXIS You're mad!

ARTHUR Absolutely. Madly in love with you. I've never been in love before. I was married, not in love. I want you. And I will have you. You nursed me back to health. I have to look after you.

ALEXIS Oh, my poor baby!

ARTHUR Two months, two years, sometime soon, we'll get the lodge, ha... sell it to the Germans for condominiums...or the Swiss. Better yet, some Arabs. And disappear to the South Seas forever and ever. These people can sink into the sunset. They never cared for me. Just my name. Do you really love me?

ALEXIS If you love me!

ARTHUR Dear God, I want out of here so bad. Out. I have always had to act out somebody else's fantasy of being rich and I have never had more than ten cents of my own to do what I want to do. I have been a performing seal for these people all my life. I deserve to be paid off. I love you. I want you. There is nothing unfair about having my esteemed family finance a few years of happiness for me.

ALEXIS Can you really get the money?

ARTHUR I feel like I'm nineteen. Do you know, I never was nineteen. On my eighteenth birthday I turned fifty. They married me

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to that fat girl from New Jersey, with the secret dowry. Her father pretended to be a farmer. My father's best business deal in a decade. And believe me, it was a business deal. Father needed the money, badly. He knew, but nobody else did. What a bully! He persuaded me it was an honour and a duty to marry a beautiful American I had never even seen. God! Some beauty! You know, they treated her better than me. Moved her into the house with them. Like they had acquired another child. She loved it. They made her feel... they, not me...like a glamorous debutante. She got away from her parents, her town, from the scene of all her humiliations. She was in heaven.

ALEXIS But she doesn't seem that dumb to me.

ARTHUR She's not dumb. But there are limits to how much you can change. Losing fifty pounds didn't take away the fear. Believe me, I'm an expert.

ALEXIS Why did you turn nineteen at the age of fifty-eight?

ARTHUR I met a woman who wanted me.

ALEXIS Did you ever think why?

ARTHUR It must be the money! Yes, the money. With a little luck, maybe I'll soon get enough to finance a modest retirement for two.

ALEXIS Nurses always fall in love with their patients.

ARTHUR We must never tell people we're in love. It's not becoming to people our age. We shall say we're fond of each other, loyal, lonely, things like that. But never love. That will be our secret.

ALEXIS But I am in love. I think your mother likes me.

ARTHUR She has no choice.

ALEXIS Did you talk to your mother about the new will?

ARTHUR Not yet.

ALEXIS Have you got it with you?

ARTHUR Oh yes.

ALEXIS Are you going to ask her?

ARTHUR This afternoon. I can't wait any longer. The doctor says she's very frail.

ALEXIS Oh, Arthur! Hurry up and do. If that's the way. Hurry, let's get out of here.

ARTHUR I have it all worked out. Elenor needs the money. I'll take the lodge instead of Elenor, and she can have the money, as a favour. Mother will think that's fair. Once she even said that she was worried about how Elenor would support herself. It sounds generous if you think there's millions of dollars in that trust fund. In fact, I say in the will that I get a small proportion of the money in compensation. And, of course, Elenor is always welcome here. Just as before. She'll sign. It even says Will gets the lodge after me. She'll sign.

ALEXIS I hope it works. I want you all to myself.

ARTHUR All things are possible.

ALEXIS Where is everybody?

ARTHUR Down at the dock.

ALEXIS Come to my room.

ARTHUR You are shocking to every aspect of propriety, good morals to which my upbringing has accustomed me.

ALEXIS You're a dirty old man! How can someone fifty-eight be so sexy?

Then you could take over the family fortune. We could have trustee meetings together all afternoon.

(Barry sits; kisses her hard) I knew something would arouse you.

(He kisses her again) I've learned something about men...

(and rolls on top of her)

BARRY

(teasing) Shut up.

(As lights fade, we see Arthur and Alexis dimly through the scrim in one bedroom, Barry and Elenor in another, and on the porch, Grace and Will. They have arrived there casually, almost unnoticed during the prior sequences, and taken seats. At this point, Will is on the wicker sofa with his head in Grace's lap. She strokes his hair. A few more bars of the theme music to this scene and lights dim to darkness)

ARTHUR

After a long fast, even a modest meal is a banquet.

(they disappear into her bedroom; crescendo of music, lights dim)

(lights up through the scrim on one of the bedrooms. Elenor is sitting on her bed in her bathing suit; she is massaging the back of a person lying on the bed; we can't see who it is; presently it will be revealed that it is Barry)

ELENOR

There, how's that, lumbar tension, always the worst kind.

(a moan of pleasure from the bed)

My god, you tan well. You must be part Indian. I think you're going to be a hunchback. Just like that good-for-nothing father of yours. Best thing that ever happened to you when that drunken old sot ran off. You never even saw him. He was gone before you were born. Have you been lifting weights this year? Your shoulders are huge. You're getting muscle bound, you know that, don't you. It's not attractive. Too many muscles are frightening to the girls. We like to feel overwhelmed not overpowered. You're taking training much too seriously.

(Barry sits up. He kisses her. They embrace. He lies down again. She continues to massage)

You're sweet, you know that? The sweetest thing in this whole house. Except for Wilbert! A woman of fifty-two does not deserve to be ravished by a muscle-bound college boy no matter how fit she is. You know, when I was your age, I had sex quite regularly. Fucking you call it now. God! If I'd said that word I would have been expelled. If mother had ever known about my affair! A bus driver! She would have died. A bus driver! Can you imagine. Not only immoral, but the wrong class. Absolutely unforgiveable. He was killed in the war, poor bastard. I used to write to him under an assumed name. He said he understood.

(Barry rolls over; she continues to massage his chest; kisses him on the lips)

God it's nice to have you around. I'll have to arrange that you go to graduate school in Toronto. Forget that hockey stuff. I'd like you a little closer to home. How can we worm the tuition out of that tight-fisted brother of mine?

(Lights up centre stage; Arthur staggers in carrying Cybil; puts her down in a chair; she fusses; he goes out and carries in a wheel chair)

CYBIL

I don't know why you didn't get Barry to carry me up from the boat. He doesn't mind.

ARTHUR

I should hope he doesn't mind. At \$10,000.00 a year for tuition, that's roughly \$500.00 a trip, or \$10.00 a step.

CYBIL

That was a nice boat ride, Arthur. One thing, you drive very well. And I'm so glad you're getting the boat fixed. Everyone will be happy.

ARTHUR

It's the least I could do.

CYBIL

So the lodge is going to be yours! Does that make you happy?

ARTHUR

Of course it does.

CYBIL

But I never thought you liked it.

ARTHUR

Oh, there are a few little things I complain about.

CYBIL

Well, I'm glad too. Elenor will need the money.

You don't need the money. And in the unlikely event that I go hence, she can be your guest instead of mine.

It really doesn't make any difference.

ARTHUR

Well, it seemed to me the way it ought to be. I hope you didn't think I was forward for having the will drawn up.

CYBIL No Arthur. It was good. Decisive. Just like your father. But I think I should tell Elenor.

ARTHUR Let's not. It will just upset everybody if they start thinking about changing the will. She can only be pleasantly surprised.

CYBIL But I don't want her to be happy when I die!

ARTHUR She won't be happy! Her grief will be modestly, only modestly, appeased.

CYBIL It was nice to see the Pringles again. They were very nice. They shouldn't have given me that cocktail. It's a good thing Elenor wasn't there. Let's go back tomorrow.

ARTHUR Yes, they were very pleasant.

CYBIL Just another will!

ARTHUR Didn't seem to phase them a bit. (laughing) You might just as well have asked them to take you water skiing. Do you go there often to change your will? Something I don't know about?

CYBIL Oh, no, that's not where I go. I go to the Robertsons.

ARTHUR Very funny.
(Enter Will)

WILL There you are! I've been looking all over for you, Nana. Where did you go?

CYBIL I went for a boat ride with your father.

ARTHUR Yes.

WILL Really? In the launch?

CYBIL Arthur is going to get the launch refinished. It looks dreadful, all scratched up, doesn't it Arthur?

ARTHUR Sure does! Why don't you stay with Nana now. I have some things to do upstairs.

WILL Sure. That's what I wanted.
(Arthur goes upstairs; passes Barry coming downstairs; they look strangely at one another. Arthur has taken an envelope from his back pocket - the will)

 Did you bounce around in the boat?

CYBIL Oh, no. Arthur brought lots of cushions. He carried me down to the boat and back up. That was the rough part.
(to Barry) Where were you? I had to be carried by another man!

BARRY I didn't know Mrs. B. I would have carried you. You know that. I was working, upstairs.

CYBIL Well, that's all right.

WILL Do you want to do another tape, Nana?

CYBIL If you like. But it will cost you a glass of sherry.

WILL If Elenor catches me giving you sherry, she'll...

CYBIL She'll what? I order you to give me sherry! There. That will do it. You have no choice.

BARRY Which would you like?

CYBIL See, he's not afraid of her!

WILL Yea, but she's afraid of him.

BARRY Not exactly afraid.

CYBIL Bristol Cream. With ice. And a twist of lemon.
(Barry pours drinks; Will sets up video and lights)

BARRY You want a beer?

WILL Sure.
(Barry goes to kitchen and returns with two beers)

CYBIL Let's do the wedding. I want to do the wedding.

WILL Just wait till I get set up.

CYBIL It's marvellous being ninety. Everything is marvellous - except your body which is a bit of a wreck.

WILL I'm looking forward to it.

BARRY Hey, I'll bet you can even remember Queen Victoria.

CYBIL I never knew her personally, but, yes, I remember when she was Queen. She was an old sour puss.

WILL (to Barry) How are you doing?

BARRY Tired.

WILL (to Cybil) Did they really beat the servants in those days?
(to Barry) Hard afternoon?

CYBIL Oh, you had to! You had to! They'd steal you blind.
But not your mother, of course. She is the most trustworthy person I have ever known.

WILL Almost.

CYBIL I remember once my father made me beat one of the servant's children who broke my doll. It was awful. I hated it.
And she hated me all the time after that. I remember it so well.
Father held her, and I had to hit with the riding crop.
After, I tried to give her money and make up. I told her I didn't want to do it. She took the money. But she was never really my friend.

BARRY It's a good thing you never beat me!

CYBIL But I like you to carry me around! I'd never beat you!

WILL All set. Ready, Nana?

CYBIL How do I look?

WILL You look like a ninety year old T.V. star.

BARRY What'll it be this time?

WILL Secrets of the black lagoon. The Wedding! Can you do it without the music, Nana? We don't have the Wedding March. It wouldn't be right with the Moonlight Sonata.

CYBIL I'll try.

WILL Don't worry about mistakes. Just start over again. I can splice it.

CYBIL What?

WILL Splice it. It's like rubbing out the mistakes.

CYBIL Whatever you say. (Will turns on the lights)
(Cybil tries to be very elegant when she speaks. The impression is of a woman who was once quite grand and dramatic; she draws her breath, then a long pause, then she starts as if she had been speaking all afternoon)
But of all the parties here at Loon Lake, I think the most magnificent of all was the wedding of our only son to Grace Hetherington, his loving wife to this day. We never had more people, important people, up to the lake, than that day. Except perhaps the funeral. Grace's father was an ordinary man, a farmer, from New Jersey. But a very fine man. He was very charming in his way. The financial people seemed to like him.
Mr. and Mrs. Hetherington came back several times after that for visits. They travelled alone by coach, all the way from New York....Is this all right?...

WILL It's perfect. Keep going.

CYBIL We even had a band from Toronto for dancing. We put up a huge tent where the tennis courts are now and Canon Dickson from St. Paul's closed his church that weekend so he could be here with us.

The ceremony was magnificent. The bride wore here grandmother's dress and her great-great grandmother's veil, which, I was told, had been in their family since the time of the Revolutionary Wars. Brigadier Anderson, who was the commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces in the Great War was here. He was such a gentleman. He said he'd never before kissed a Yankee rebel, and he never would again, but any American who came so far into the great wilderness had to be a gentleman. He was referring to Grace's father. After that, Brigadier General Anderson went into the mining business with some financier from New York at the wedding. He became his man in Canada. They made quite a lot of money. He started going to Florida in the winter, so we never saw him much anymore. A pity.

WILL Sold his country for a month in Fort Lauderdale!

CYBIL No, they went to Palm Beach. I was there once. It was nice. But, really, it's so hot down there. Should I tell about the initiation?

WILL Absolutely.

CYBIL But I don't know very much.

WILL Just tell what you know.

CYBIL Two days before the wedding, my late husband took the groom-to-be on a mysterious journey. It was for the men only, he said. He always referred to it as "the initiation". Arthur was only eighteen. I didn't want him to go. Jason took him with his hunting friends from the village. They were rather rough types. But there was nothing I could do. ... Things were different then...Then they came back the night before the wedding. I remember hearing them singing as they paddled across the lake. You'd think they'd been to Winnipeg and back. French Canadian songs. They weren't even drunk. They carried Arthur on their shoulders up the hill. They weren't even shaved. And into the grand tent. And set him down at the feet of the bride. And sang another song.

Nobody understood the words. But she laughed. Everybody laughed. Except Arthur. He was always so serious. Mr. Hetherington was aghast until he saw Jason, my late husband, bringing up the rear of the procession cheering them on, as if he were drunk. He wasn't of course. And then they left. And we had a lovely wedding. It was so beautiful.
(long silence)

BARRY

Is that it?

CYBIL

Yes, that's all I know.

WILL

That was terrific, Nana, terrific.

CYBIL

I wish I knew the rest of the story.

BARRY

We'll have to get Mr. B. drunk and make him tell what happened up the lake.

CYBIL

When you find out, tell me. I'm so old it won't matter.

BARRY

(teasing) Well, I couldn't do that if it's "men's talk". You know, private.

CYBIL

Oh, you're all the same. Get me another drink.

(Barry pours another)

I know anyhow. That's one of women's secrets. We know all your secrets anyhow.

BARRY

(laughing) No more after this. Only because it's your birthday.

CYBIL

This won't hurt my leg!

BARRY

Nobody's worried about your leg. It's your liver, heart and blood pressure the doctor told us to watch out for.

CYBIL

What do you know about that anyhow? You're not a doctor.

BARRY

I was taking physiology this year.

CYBIL

If you're going to use your education against me, I won't pay for it anymore. Why should I pay?

WILL (who has been disassembling the lights and video) Nana!

CYBIL Put on my music. Something modern for my birthday. Glen Miller.

WILL Glen Miller!

CYBIL I still went dancing with your grandfather until I was forty-two. I like Glen Miller.

BARRY Glen Miller it is! (hunts for Glen Miller record)

CYBIL The one with the red cover. There it is. There it is.
(Barry puts it on)

WILL So, Nana, we've done the wedding, the Duke of Gloucester, the great winter storm, the regatta, the honeymoon, the last log drive, the first steamer, the launch, what else...

CYBIL I think I should tell about the time that Rockefeller man came here to go fishing with Jason. Really he wanted to buy the company. But Jason wouldn't sell. And he didn't catch any fish.

WILL Tomorrow you're on! Rockefeller it is! (Music starts)

BARRY Ladies and Gentlemen, Glen Miller and his Band.

CYBIL Can I dance with you? (to Barry) Ladies choice. Just once more before I die.

WILL Nana, don't talk that way. It's not fair.

CYBIL I'm an old lady. I'm ninety years old. Forget I have a broken leg. It wasn't my fault. One last request.

WILL Aunt Elenor will be furious.

CYBIL I'm not asking that you dance with her. She's not even pretty, if you don't mind my saying so.

BARRY Two glasses of sherry!

CYBIL Yes, and I want a third.

WILL No.

CYBIL But it's so beautiful.

WILL Stop doing this to me!

CYBIL I don't want to dance with you. I want to dance with my darling over here. (to Barry)

BARRY Isn't it a little dangerous, Mrs. B?

CYBIL If you can carry me up and down those steps, you can waltz me around the room. It would only be dangerous if I had two legs on the floor to trip over.

(Barry and Will shrug; Barry picks her up; and slowly sachés around the room; Cybil looks dreamy)

You dance just like Jason.

WILL You say that about everything he does.

CYBIL It's marvellous
(Will approaches)

WILL May I cut in?

CYBIL With one of the children? Of course. Of course.
Wait here for me, Jason. I'll be right back!

(Will takes Cybil in his arms and dances; he is noticeably more clumsy than Barry, presumably from the weight; a few quiet moments pass as they dance. Arthur comes down the stairs; when he sees what is happening; he starts to rush; he's almost at the bottom before he starts to speak)

ARTHUR What are you doing? What are you doing? The doctor said no...She's ninety years old!

(He rushes up; before anyone can say anything, he grabs Cybil from Will's arms; but he doesn't have a secure hold or a secure footing and he drops her; she bangs her head on the table and passes out)

Look what you've done! You're really going to get it!

(Barry runs off calling "mum, mum, come quick" and calls up the stairs, "Elenor, Elenor, it's Mrs. B.")

WILL Me! Me!! You ass! Everything was all right. Why did you grab her? You dropped her! Oh my god, she's out cold! You killed her! You killed her!

ARTHUR You idiot! I told you not to carry her around!

WILL We were dancing!

ARTHUR Dancing!

(Sally, Elenor and Alexis rush in)

SALLY Oh my God, she's out cold!

ALEXIS (very cool under pressure)
(to Sally) Have you got salts? Get the salts!
(Sally exits) What happened?
(Alexis pushes Elenor aside and checks pulse, breath, heart)

WILL He dropped her!

ARTHUR You should have seen what he was doing.

WILL I think she hit her head.

ALEXIS (examines Cybil) Her head is bleeding. Her skull is fractured. Her arm is broken. I think her spine is all right.

ARTHUR Dear God!

ELENOR The rest of her seems all right. Barry, take her up to her room...gently...gently.

(they put her onto a collapsible coffee table. Barry lifts her and takes her upstairs; Sally comes back in with salts and follows Barry and Elenor upstairs.)

(Grace rushes in; sees Will and Arthur looking up the stairs, fearful; she realizes what has happened and rushes up the stairs)

(crescendo music, lights dim and out)

ACT I, Scene iv

(lights up, downstairs is in darkness; we can see Arthur dimly sitting slumped in a chair; through the scrim we see Cybil in her bed, eyes closed, with Alexis nursing her. Outside her door wait Sally, Elenor and Grace. We hear the Moonlight Sonata.

Music stops. Alexis comes to the door and lets in Sally; she goes to the bed; kneels, cries)

ALEXIS She has been asking for you. She wants you. Don't let her talk too much. She's too frail. It's very bad.
(Cybil pulls Sally over to her and whispers something)

SALLY (to Alexis) She wants me to set the table for breakfast and bring her some tea! It's only eight o'clock!

ALEXIS She doesn't know. Maybe she could drink some tea. Why don't you make it for her. That's what she wants.

SALLY I'll do it right away.
(Sally rushes out and goes downstairs to the kitchen; Elenor and Grace are allowed into the room)

ELENOR How is she?

GRACE We should take her to the hospital.

ALEXIS She can't be moved.

ELENOR Dr. Anderson isn't up this weekend. He's the only one on the lake. I phoned the doctor in the village. He'll call back as soon as he gets in.

ALEXIS You can only stay a moment. She is very weak.
(Elenor and Grace go to each side of the bed and take Cybil's hands. Choke back the tears. Cybil lifts their hands to one another and the three hold hands.)

ELENOR Dear mum, you'll be all right. You'll be all right.
(As Elenor and Cybil look at each other, Alexis, unseen to them gestures to Grace, shakes her head to indicate death is near)

(Alexis gently takes them from the bed and ushers them out into the hall)

ALEXIS We must keep her very quiet. She hasn't lost that much blood, but the shock is severe. Come back in ten minutes.
(Grace goes down the hall and disappears off-stage upstairs. Elenor goes downstairs; lights up on she and Arthur in central sitting room.)

ARTHUR (drinking; not looking up) How is she?

ELENOR (draind, cutting edge of anger detectable) She's almost dead. You better go up and see her.

ARTHUR I guess I better. Can she talk?

ELENOR No. She's barely conscious.

ARTHUR That's good. I couldn't bear what she'd say to me.

ELENOR She wouldn't say anything.

ARTHUR She'd tell me I was a clumsy oaf. She always said that.

ELENOR Don't talk like that. (pause)

ARTHUR Are you angry with me?

ELENOR I'm always angry with you. But not about this. It was an accident. It had to happen soon.

ARTHUR She wants her ashes scattered here, you know.

ELENOR Of course she would.

ARTHUR I can't stand that.

ELENOR What?

ARTHUR All this nonsense about the lake.

ELENOR It's our home.

ARTHUR Your home. Not mine.

ELENOR Let's not talk about it.

ARTHUR Scatter her ashes - just like Jason Alexander Braithewaite,
O.B.E!

ELENOR You really hated him, didn't you?

ARTHUR I waited on him hand and foot for fifty years.

ELENOR Why did you bring Alexis up here?

ARTHUR I told you. She's a nurse.

ELENOR Did you plan to drop mother on her head so she'd need
a nurse?

ARTHUR Don't be disgusting!

ELENOR I see through all of this!

ARTHUR Let's not talk about it.

ELENOR The family motto - when in doubt, don't talk about it.

ARTHUR This isn't the time.

ELENOR Did you really think you could just move your mistress into
your mother's house right under the nose of your wife?

ARTHUR She doesn't care.

ELENOR How can you say that!

ARTHUR I could be replaced by a stuffed doll anytime and it would
be no difference to her.

ELENOR There are certain things stuffed dolls don't do.

ARTHUR Well, she doesn't know about them.

ELENOR And you got the message late in life, is that it?

ARTHUR What do you know about such things?

ELENOR More than you think.

ARTHUR Your solidier boy was killed long ago.

ELENOR Did you know about that?

ARTHUR Sure.

ELENOR Did mother?

ARTHUR Oh hell, no! Father would never tell her a thing like that!

ELENOR Father!

ARTHUR Jason Alexander Braithewaite, O.B.E, you remember him?

ELENOR Did you tell him?

ARTHUR He told me.

(pause)

ELENOR Will you give me money so I can keep this place up?

ARTHUR I've waited forty years for this question.

ELENOR Well.

(pause)

ARTHUR No.

ELENOR Rat.

ARTHUR Hit me again.

(Elenor storms out. Sally comes from the kitchen with a tea tray. She puts it down and comes over to Arthur)

SALLY You are nothing but trouble. I told your mum that all along. First you break her head, and she's dying upstairs, and then you blame it on your boy. And now you go getting Elenor all upset. You've been spoiled rotten.

ARTHUR Sally, I've had enough for today. Why don't you shove it.

SALLY You...

ARTHUR You hear me.

SALLY If your mum could hear you...

ARTHUR She never will!

SALLY How can you talk like that?

ARTHUR Good old Sally. Loyal to the dying breath.

SALLY I wish you were small again. I would whop you.

ARTHUR Fat chance.

SALLY Your father would tan your hide.

ARTHUR Mother wouldn't let him.

SALLY You bringing that woman up here. Trading in your wife. You got no right. No right. This is a decent family.

ARTHUR Grace doesn't mind.

SALLY She's too nice to you.

ARTHUR You've been around here a long time, Sally. Is Grace anything but nice?

SALLY That's what she's supposed to be! She's a lady!

ARTHUR And what does that make you? (silence as Sally fumes)
Alexis is a nurse. I brought her here to look after mother.

SALLY You were going to move her in here. I heard you. I know about you and her. You've got absolutely no respect. I never told your mother that. I never told her any of the things you did. She don't know you're bad. She don't know. She's going to her Maker thinking you're respectable. She doesn't know you're evil. I should tell her! I should tell her!

ARTHUR (showing some alarm) You leave her out of this! It's none of her concern. She's a dying woman.

SALLY I'm going to tell her! I'm going to tell her! Bringing your mistress into her very own home.

ARTHUR (Arthur grabs her) You'll do nothing of the sort, you fat old bitch. You want your job, you keep your mouth shut. You hear? Keep your mouth shut. Or Barry will never see Yale again. And I mean it!

(Sally runs from the room crying, toward the kitchen.
Arthur goes upstairs. Knocks lightly on his mother's door
Alexis comes out)

ARTHUR How is she?

ALEXIS It's touch and go. If she lasts the night, she might make it. She's very frail.

ARTHUR Everybody blames me.

ALEXIS It wasn't your fault.

ARTHUR Is she conscious?

ALEXIS Barely. Mostly not. She wants Sally. She keeps calling for Sally. Where is she?

ARTHUR I don't know.

ALEXIS I'll go look for her. I've told the others to stay away. You can go in if you're very quiet.

(Alexis goes downstairs. Arthur enters the room. He approaches the bed)

CYBIL Sally.

ARTHUR No, mother, it's Arthur.

CYBIL Sally.

ARTHUR It's me.

CYBIL Sally.

(Arthur looks her deep in the eye)

ARTHUR

Arthur.

CYBIL

Sally...

ARTHUR

I'm sorry I dropped you, mother. Really, I am.

CYBIL

Sally...

ARTHUR

...Mother... (He gives up)

(Cybil lapses into silence. Arthur, thinking she has died, listens for her breath. Then he takes a pillow and quietly smothers Cybil. She shows no sign of resistance. He neatly replaces the pillow and leaves the room, and goes downstairs. He puts on the Moonlight Sonata, 1st movement, and sits in the dimly lit room. Shortly we see Elenor upstairs come down the hall, knock gently, then enter the room. A few moments later she comes out and says loudly:)

ELENOR

Mother has left us.

(Downstairs, Arthur hangs his head. Grace rushes down the upstairs hall and embraces Elenor. Alexis comes from the other direction and goes into the room. Will opens another upstairs door and comes out into the hall. Barry follows him.

Lights dim out and music reaches crescendo ending with a loon cry spliced into the Moonlight Sonata, 1st movement.)

ACT II, Scene i

(Arthur lies on sofa with his head on Alexis' lap; the curtains are open and the sun pours in. It is sunset. Chopin Prelude #7 is playing. A bottle of liquor is open on the table. Arthur has been drinking.)

ARTHUR God, it's glorious to be alone here with you!

ALEXIS When will they be back?

ARTHUR Never, I hope.

ALEXIS It can't take that long.

ARTHUR Soon we will be rid of all this. Free of this sentimental slop. Just you and I.

ALEXIS How far did they go?

ARTHUR (jumps to his feet, struts around grandly as he talks. He stops the record playing)
The mooseheads, and the bear hides and the antlers, and the Indian legends and the video tapes and dear sweet Grace and Elenor the Screw and fat Sally. And the brute from Yale. God what a waste of money! I'd burn this fairy castle to the ground if it weren't worth \$500,000.00 from some neurotic German businessman. Ha! Condominiums! That's what I'll do! They'll hate me! They'll hate me, and I don't care! I love you!

ALEXIS Is there a ceremony?

ARTHUR God yes! Mumbo jumbo till you puke!

ALEXIS Will took his tape machine.

ARTHUR They all lived for this moment. Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust. Cybil Braithewaite is strewn in Loon Lake. Elegant pollution! Bullshit!

ALEXIS I thought you were more sentimental.

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ARTHUR Only about you my love.

ALEXIS Will Grace and Sally be all right?

ARTHUR Meathead and Willy the Wimp will look after them.

ALEXIS I want to get this over with.

ARTHUR I'm not afraid.

ALEXIS Why didn't you go?

ARTHUR When they scattered my old man, you know what...just
after they poured the ashes to the wind...you know what...
this damn loon starts to crow. Come to take him away!
That's what they all said! He's gone away in the loon!
It was more than a sensible man could bear!

ALEXIS But he made all the money!

ARTHUR When I was eighteen, just before my wedding to fat Grace,
he took me up the lake to this fat prostitute with all
his drunken hunting buddies. The "initiation"! She
was disgusting. I'm not going up the lake again.
Not ever!

ALEXIS When are you going to tell Grace?

ARTHUR Why don't you tell her?

ALEXIS Me! Your mother's gone now. You promised.

ARTHUR I'm joking. I'll tell her. But she knows. She knows.
She must know.

ALEXIS Tomorrow. When things are back to normal. I want to get
out of here.

ARTHUR That's not "normal". The same as before at the Braithewaite
lodge perhaps, but that's not normal.

ALEXIS Are you glad it's over?

ARTHUR Desperately. I wish it had ended thirty years ago.
I feel like a prisoner whose cell door has been thrown open just at the end of a life sentence. Just a few moments left. And I'm afraid to go outside. I've forgotten how to live. Why didn't you come for me a long time ago?

ALEXIS You think I set you free?

ARTHUR I'm not free yet. My God, I love you. (they embrace)

ALEXIS Please let's hurry. Let's get out of here. Do what you have to. Let's get out of here. I think I hear them down at the dock.

ARTHUR You're right.

ALEXIS Do you want me here?

ARTHUR Do you want to be?

ALEXIS No.

ARTHUR Then go - have a nap.

ALEXIS Just get the money and let's get out of here.
(Alexis exits upstairs; shortly after the others enter from the lake side. Will, Sally, Elenor first, then Grace a few moments later. She is apprehensive as she comes in. Will puts on record player - Moonlight Sonata)

ARTHUR Where's Barry?

WILL He's putting the canoes away.

ELENOR The green one leaks. Did you know that Arthur?

ARTHUR No, I didn't know that. We must get it fixed.

SALLY Well, tea it is. We must have tea. The way we always do. She'd want it that way, wouldn't she, Mrs. B.?

GRACE Yes, Sally, I think so.
(Grace glares at her drunken husband. Exit Sally)

ARTHUR So how did it go? (Arthur stops the record)

ELENOR It was the way she would have wanted it. Just like father.
The sun cast a sparkle on the lake. The wind was firm.
We read her poems. Will cast the ashes.

ARTHUR Will!

ELENOR And they disappeared, "dissolved" into the storming power
of the north"? Is that how it went, Will?

WILL Yes. And just after that this loon started to cry. Did
you know that, father. Just after I scattered the ashes
and they were being carried away by the wind. It was beautiful.

ARTHUR How touching.

GRACE Just like your father's funeral, Arthur.

ELENOR It was uncanny. It would have made a believer out of you,
Arthur. I'm sure mother went to her Maker in perfect faith
that the loon was waiting for her, that day, that space.

WILL I taped it.
(Will sets up his machine to play the tape.)

ARTHUR I don't need to hear it now if you people don't feel up to it.

ELENOR It's all right.

GRACE You should have come, Arthur.

ARTHUR With my back I would be absolutely miserable for days
Not the way I want to remember mother.

WILL It was beautiful.
(Will starts the tape. As he does, Barry enters and silently
takes a seat at the rear of the stage. Tape plays - we hear
Will's voice reading a poem)

WILL This is the end of the reading.

ELENOR It was very well done. Very fitting.

TAPE/WILL

We are the dead, washed by the waves that numb the
fingers of the paddlers,
Dried by the winds that chill the bones of the living
We are the darkness sleeping, the snow that covers;
We are the quiet and the howling, the growing and decaying,
the warm cold;
We are the sternness of the forest; together, ashes and ashes;
We are alone together in these lonely lovely places forever
to remind you.
(We hear whistling wind and long loon calls; end tape,
Will shuts it off)

WILL

I'm going to put it in my piece. This loon call.
It's really beautiful.

GRACE

You read that very well. It was very nice.

ELENOR

Mother had a nice turn of phrase about the north. A little
maudlin on occasion. But that piece is very nice.

GRACE

Will, you almost knew it by memory.

WILL

I have her reading it on one of the tapes. It's really
beautiful.

ARTHUR

(Summoning courage; standing to make an announcement)
Yes, well, we have to get on with living, don't we?
(Nobody pays any attention; Sally comes in with tea)
Can't dwell in the past.
(Sally pours; Will pulls T.V. over into the group and selects
a video tape)
Things go on. They don't stay the same. It's an occasion
for a change.

GRACE

(ignoring Arthur) Poor old dear. Such a charmed life.

ARTHUR

A time to re-evaluate; regroup to go on, don't you think?
Take a fresh look.

ELENOR

Not today Arthur.

(Will switches on the video)

TAPE/CYBIL This is the story about The Great Bear Rug.

WILL She's talking to Barry.

ARTHUR Oh God, spare me.
(Arthur slumps in his chair, defeated; pours brandy in his tea and closes his eyes. Barry takes some brandy in a cup and drinks nervously)

ELENOR I haven't heard this one for years.

CYBIL/TAPE I always wanted a bear rug.
(They all look up. The bear rug now hangs on the wall)
Jason said we should trap the bear ourselves. He insisted I come on the hunting trip. I didn't think it was quite a lady-like thing to do, but really, who cares. I made him promise not to tell people at the club that I was with him.

WILL That's why she didn't tell the story very often.

CYBIL/TAPE We flew from Timmins into a lake I never heard of and don't quite remember. Quite late in the fall. It doesn't matter. Jason arranged for guides to meet us. That's when they wanted to send me back on the plane. They didn't want a woman on the trip. One of them was a cousin of Peter Wildbird who used to trap with your father, Barry. But Jason made them take me. They were quite nice after a day or two, after they found out I was quite a good cook!

SALLY Ha! Cooking again.

ELENOR Actually, she could. Over an open fire she was a wiz!

SALLY Well, I never!

CYBIL/TAPE And Jason paddled with me so they didn't feel unfairly put upon. He was a strong canoeist, as you remember. And I was quite good too in those days.

BARRY/TAPE I'll bet you were.

CYBIL/TAPE As a matter of fact, after two days, the guides offered to stern for me. I paddled too, of course, but a woman is not as strong as a man.

ELENOR That's because they don't feed us properly.

CYBIL/TAPE It was a special bear they were after. One that Jason heard about from your father. He paid these men plenty to take us to him. They were quite excited about it. A famous bear in the north. A big one. Well, you can see the rug! The Indians called him Numchuk. It means "big one" or something like that. And he was very old. Once an English zoologist took a picture of him when he was tripping up there, and the picture was in the Daily Telegraph. The Beaver's paper in London. Call of the Wild, it said.

ARTHUR I remember that, mother.

CYBIL/TAPE After about a week, the guides got all excited. They were sure they had found fresh tracks. I don't understand such things. But Jason did. We camped three days. I tended camp. Caught fish. Cooked.

SALLY She never fished!

CYBIL/TAPE I was quite good at all those things. Jason taught me. They hunted. Well, one afternoon, while they were gone, I was sitting in the sun. Just resting. It was a beautiful afternoon. I had been down at the lake. And this bear wandered out of the forest right in front of me. I was petrified. I knew it was the one they were after because he was so big. I'd seen bears before. With Jason. I didn't move. You're not supposed to look frightened. He came into the camp site. It was a clearing. And wandered around sniffing things. Then he sat down opposite me. And just looked at me. I wasn't so frightened anymore. Just looked at me. I looked at him. It was like he was a person.

ARTHUR Mother, you shouldn't take chances like that.

CYBIL He held his arms out to me. Rolled over. Doing tricks for me. I looked at him. I wondered how long he would stay. The men had all the guns. They wouldn't believe me anyhow if I told them. The bear was supposed to be dangerous! I wanted to say "Look out, my husband is hunting you with a gun. He'll kill you". But I didn't. It seemed like it would be interfering with the hunt. Do you understand?

BARRY/TAPE Not exactly.

CYBIL/TAPE It's too difficult to explain. Then the bear just went away. Just got up and left. He seemed lonely. A little while later the men came back. I never told them. And the next day they shot him. We had two magnificent dinners, but we had to leave the rest of the meat. The skin was very bulky. And it smelled! But it's a beautiful rug, don't you think?

BARRY/TAPE I used to like to play on it when I was a kid.

CYBIL/TAPE We have a picture (end of tape)

ELENOR That was amazing.

ARTHUR I'd heard about the great hunting trip before, but never about her little meeting with the bear. It's hard to know when the truth ends and fancy begins.

ELENOR Does it matter?

GRACE I think it's beautiful. She had a marvellous life.

WILL I would never have shot the bear after that.

ELENOR She didn't.

ARTHUR Symbolically, it's perfect. The beautiful enchantress lures the great wild spirit of the north into a clearing and steals his soul. Then her master, her keeper, finds the defenceless creature and kills him. And she gets the hide as a trophy. Weren't they a team!

ELENOR Arthur!

ARTHUR A trifle cynical!

GRACE That's awful.

SALLY Well, I think it's a wonderful story.

WILL She told the story for Barry.

ELENOR She'd do anything for Barry.

ARTHUR Flexing his biceps in front of her nose.

GRACE You've had too much to drink.

SALLY Well, she knew a good man when she saw one.

ELENOR (to Barry) It's a good thing she was ninety or she might
have had your hide up on the wall too.

BARRY She was all right.

WILL Want to see another?

ARTHUR God no.

GRACE Perhaps tomorrow dear. (Will puts equipment away)

ARTHUR Well, it's the end of an era. Nobody believes in the spirits
of the wild anymore.

ELENOR Oh, I don't know.

ARTHUR You pretend, sister dear. For the sake of tradition. But
you don't really. I know you. You're too practical.

GRACE Will believes.

ARTHUR He doesn't believe it. That's why he records it all. A portable
museum of nonsense. It's art now. Or some people call it art.
Video-mythology. The only question is - will it sell?

WILL You are so mercenary.

ARTHUR You eat.

GRACE We eat very well.

WILL Art is real.

ARTHUR If there's an American fool enough to buy it.

GRACE Americans aren't as cynical as you Arthur.

ELENOR This discussion is becoming unpleasant. I don't like it.

ARTHUR Oh then, we'll stop right away.

ELENOR I'd like it if you showed me a little consideration around here from now on.

ARTHUR Oh yes, the new mistress of Loon Lake! Well, I'll just excuse myself, ma'am. Chop wood or fix the green canoe.

 (Exit Arthur upstairs - goes into same room as Alexis)

GRACE He's upset about his mother.

ELENOR He's drunk.

 (Sally clears up and takes tray to the kitchen)

SALLY I'll put out supper for nine o'clock. But you'll have to help yourselves. I'm going to bed. It's been a sad day.

 (Grace embraces her and Sally exits)

GRACE I'll be on the porch. I'd like to watch the sunset.

 (She exits wistfully. Elenor eyes Will and then Barry)

ELENOR Will, why don't you go and fix the leak in the green canoe. I have some things for Barry to do.

 (a pause; Will and Barry look at each other; Will is pained; Barry is noncommittal)

WILL All right. I'm just going to put away this video stuff.

(Will works on equipment. Elenor beckons Barry to follow her. They go upstairs, into Cybil's room.

Lights dim downstairs. We see Will faintly. Lights brighten in the bedroom so we can see Elenor and Barry

Will puts on the Loon Tapes

We see Elenor slump on to the bed, sitting, exhausted. Barry hesitates. Looks resigned, or disgusted, behind her back. Then, kneeling on the bed behind her, he massages her shoulders. She sighs.

Lights fade to darkness on whole stage, leaving Will sitting alone, dejected in main room; Sally enters.

Lights up on centre stage - Will and Sally)

SALLY Are you still playing that?

WILL It's almost done. It's good, really.

SALLY Loons and crickets and thunder and I don't what all. I've been coming here thirty years with you Nana and I never heard of putting those things on no record.

WILL The great sounds of the north! The symphony of the wilderness.

SALLY Well, I just don't know. I've never heard of such a thing. You thinking people will buy the record 'stead of coming up to the lake?

WILL I want to get somebody to compose a dance for it. The Dance of the Wild.

SALLY A dance! A dance! That's the silliest thing I ever heard of. Who ever gave you that idea? A dance. What would your grandfather say?

WILL He liked modern things. He was one of the people who modernized the north.

SALLY I know what he liked, and it wasn't dancing loons.

WILL Trust me. Times have changed. It will be great. We need to translate the spirit of the vast Canadian wilderness into the modern idiom.

SALLY Turn that damn thunder off! You'd think it was storming outside.

WILL I'll invite you to the first performance.

SALLY Will, I've come to all your school concerts, and plays and commencements, church pageants, field days and regattas, everything your nanny dragged me off to, and I never complained. It was my job. But I don't think I better come to this one.

WILL Why?

SALLY 'Cause if I hear people clapping at them loons, I'll laugh!
(Will laughs)

WILL Okay. But I'm going to invite you anyhow.

SALLY Where's Barry?

WILL I guess he's gone to bed.

SALLY He sure takes his training serious, don't he?

WILL Hockey's a big thing for him.

SALLY Oh, Will, I'll always be grateful to your Nanny for sending him to school. To Yale! Imagine! My boy going to a place like that! That was the nicest thing she ever did for me. She was a fine woman. Why didn't you go to Yale?

WILL I couldn't get in.

SALLY But you're smarter than Barry anyday.

WILL But can I play hockey? America needs hockey players.

SALLY You think they took him for hockey?

WILL It helps.

SALLY Do you think your father will send him for the last two years? To finish? Like your Nana did? I got no reason to expect it of course. He said he wouldn't. That's what he said.

WILL Maybe Elenor will persuade him? Or mother?

SALLY Do you think? It's all I want, Will! It's all I want!
My boy, graduated from Yale! Can you imagine. It's all
I want. Will you talk to them for me? For Barry?
He's your blood brother.

WILL How do you know that?

SALLY Never mind. I'd never ask them myself. I'm not close with
them the way I was with your Nana. It's so expensive!
I'm not special to them like I was to your Nana.

WILL Don't worry about it so much.

SALLY Oh, he's been spoiled. Growing up like he was a rich boy.
He's been spoiled, that one. I just gotta get him through
school, that's all. Oh, your father won't pay. He wants
to fire me, Will. He wants to fire me. All these years
and he's gonna give me the sack.

WILL Who said that!

SALLY It's true! It's true! He told me the day she died. He
don't want me around here anymore.

WILL He can't do that!

SALLY He can. He can. He'll throw me out. Throw me out!
Oh Will, what's going to happen? Your father can't have
that harlot from the city staying here. You know that Will.
A harlot. You know what they do together. What will the
neighbours think? What if Mrs. Robertson comes over?
It's not proper.

WILL She was Nana's nurse.

SALLY Oh, dear boy, how sweet and innocent.

WILL Elenor gets the lodge. She can throw him out, if she wants.

SALLY But who will pay the bills? Your father won't pay the bills.
He wants to fire me! He said so! He wants to fire me!
I been here all my life.

WILL He won't.

SALLY He can too. If he's got the money, he can do anything.
I know. I know! He's going to get rid of me and keep
that tramp from the office. I know! I know!

WILL Things will be all right, Sally, I promise.

SALLY It'll be a scandal! It'll be bad for the business.
It will! It will! Jason would never have it like this.
Jason wouldn't have a scandal.

WILL Oh, I don't know. I've heard of a few.

SALLY Hush you, hush. Don't you ever talk like that about the dead.
Don't you. Never. I never want to hear it! He was a great man.
A great man!

WILL Sally...everything will be all right, I promise.

SALLY That harlot! She'll take the money, Will. She'll take it all.
And my boy won't get to finish his school. That's all I want
Will. So Barry can finish his school. He'll look after me
then. He'll look after me, don't you think?

WILL Why don't you go to bed? You're tired. It's been a hard day.
We'll sort all this out in the morning.

SALLY I'm goin', I'm goin'. But I'm not serving breakfast to her!
Not me. Not to no harlot.

(Sally exits; Will puts on Moonlight Sonata; lights fade
on him centre stage; lights briefly come up on the characters
in the second story rooms as described previously; then all
fades to darkness and silence)

ACT II, Scene ii

(It is early morning. Light pours through the window. We hear birds, etc. Barry enters, followed by Will. They have been swimming. The ensuing conversation is tease and taunt delivered on the run as they move around the room drying themselves, dressing, going to the kitchen for oranges, coffee, etc. It's a "slob" breakfast on the run)

WILL So, I think you like it.

BARRY It's all right.

WILL No, I really think you like it!

BARRY She's okay. She gets off. She's okay. I always kinda liked the old girl. She's not so bossy when we're fucking.

WILL How could she be?!

BARRY I've done it with older women before. Lots. She's the best. Really. She's okay.

WILL You're disgusting.

BARRY Hey, I'm a guest in her house. I gotta be gracious.

WILL America has corrupted you.

BARRY By definition, right?

WILL The flower of Canadian manhood. Just more honey in the pot for the hungry honey bees of New Haven.

BARRY Ground to dust in the sex mills of the American ruling class.

WILL It's disgusting, but at least you're becoming politically active.

BARRY Would I kid you?

WILL Yes. And you'd lie, cheat and steal too.

BARRY I learned all those things from the best families.

WILL That's legitimate Canadian skullduggery.

BARRY In America we do it for money and call it business.

WILL Stop it! I'm the wit. If you become witty, I'll be utterly defenceless.

BARRY All faggots are witty.

WILL You're not a faggot. You sleep with old ladies.

BARRY That doesn't matter. They pay me.

WILL Your credentials as a fairy are seriously in question. We are investigating.

BARRY Who? You and the loons?

WILL That was cruel.

BARRY Do you know the difference between Canadian loons and American loons?

WILL I hate your jokes.

BARRY The American loons get paid for it.

WILL Buzz off.

BARRY They have a professional organization that collects royalties for them. You'd be sued out of your canoe if they caught you taping in the Adirondacks.

WILL Ha. Ha.

BARRY Why are you so uptight. She's family. It's cool. Hey, you're still number one! I feel sorry for her. She inherits this mansion and no money to keep it. If she had trouble with your old man before, it'll be double now. There'll be a new family sport - Elenor vs Arthur - Round Twenty-seven. "Arthur, we must fix the dock. Don't you think you should contribute?"

WILL Round Twenty-eight - Barry v Arthur - Senior year at Yale. \$10,000.00 plus car allowance. You and Elenor have a lot in common.

BARRY You think maybe I should start pumping him too?

WILL You're impossible!

BARRY Maybe Elenor will speak to him for me.

WILL Oh, that'll be rich!

BARRY (mischievously) I know...Alexis!

WILL At your peril. How about Grace?

BARRY Ya, Grace can get money out of him for just about anything. Loon tapes for instance. But you gotta talk to her about it. She dotes on you. I'm a servant boy.

WILL Oh, my poor dumb hunk...how could I? She has class! I mean a servant boy whose screwing her sister-in-law! What a scandal! If the neighbours found out!? I couldn't! Poor Elenor.

BARRY Poor Wilbert, if he doesn't.

WILL Oh...Oh...blackmail. I'll call the police...sex crazed extortionist

BARRY (playfully twisting his arm, and then a menacing touch of pain; Will gasps)
(seriously) Fucking right, boy. For my mum!

WILL Someone's coming.
(Barry releases him. Elenor enters, down the stairs, eyeing them suspiciously.)

ELENOR Did I hear someone call "police"?

WILL It was a joke.

(Elenor goes off stage to the kitchen)

ELENOR (from off stage) How's the water?

WILL Terrific.

ELENOR How far did you swim?

WILL Robertson's.

ELENOR Excellent. (Elenor re-enters with orange)

WILL Aren't you going to swim?

ELENOR Not this morning.
(to Barry) Where's your mother?

BARRY I haven't seen her.

ELENOR She's usually on duty by now.

BARRY Maybe she doesn't know whether or not she has any duties.

ELENOR Of course she does!

WILL Well, you better talk to father about that. And say something to her. She's very worried. She thinks he'll fire her. She knows he doesn't like her.

ELENOR It's not for him to say anymore.
(Enter Grace - very cheery)

GRACE Good morning, everyone. Oh, what a lovely day. But, look what you're eating. That's hardly enough. You boys will waste away. Where's Sally? She should be feeding you.

WILL Oh, mother, you make it sound like we're the hogs out in the back pen.

ELENOR We need to fatten you up for market.

BARRY Which one of you is the butcher?
(a troubled pause as Elenor and Grace look at Barry quizzically)

GRACE Is your father up?

WILL Haven't seen him.

GRACE Where's Sally?

WILL She's probably still back in her cabin.

ELENOR Will says she thinks Arthur will fire her now that mother is gone.

GRACE Oh, that would be terrible.

ELENOR I'll speak to her.

GRACE You should. Would anyone like coffee?

WILL)
BARRY) No thanks. Already full.

ELENOR Yes, please.
(exit Grace to kitchen. Arthur comes down stairs)

GRACE Good morning Arthur. (continues out the kitchen door)

ARTHUR Morning. Could you bring me a coffee too, please.
Well, the first morning of the new regime. At least it's
a nice day.

ELENOR We will all miss mother dearly.

ARTHUR Of course.
(an awkward pause)

ELENOR Arthur, we must get the dock fixed. We really must.
It's dangerous. We all love this old place. I hate to see
it falling apart.

ARTHUR Ah yes, the new regime.

ELENOR You're all still welcome here, of course. Even you, Arthur ,
despite our differences. The place is mine now, but, it's
for the family. Will will get it when I'm gone. It will
always be in the family.

ARTHUR Do I have to pay rent when I come up to the old family pile?

ELENOR Well, I do think you should help with the expenses. You get the money.

ARTHUR You're being terribly reasonable this morning Elenor. Did you sleep well?

ELENOR Yes.
(Grace comes in with coffee)

ARTHUR Thank you, Grace.

ELENOR And another thing, Arthur, that we must look after right away. Really. Sally.

GRACE Yes, Sally.

ELENOR I should speak to her.

WILL She thinks you're going to fire her, father.

GRACE She's worried sick.

ELENOR She's been with us so long.

WILL So has Barry.

ARTHUR It wouldn't be unfair to have her retire, would it? I mean, she's getting on. You understand Barry, I'm sure.

GRACE She wouldn't understand.

ELENOR She's part of the family. I don't accept that.

ARTHUR But you two women, excuse me, ladies, you don't need a servant, do you? Not in this day and age.

ELENOR Do you "need" an assistant, Arthur?

GRACE But Arthur, she's always been with us.

ARTHUR My only point is that this would be a good time for her to retire.

ELENOR I completely reject that.

ARTHUR You do! Jolly well, then, you pay for her.

ELENOR You know I won't be able to do that on the money I have. It's not enough. I think it's your obligation to mother, to the family, to keep her on.

ARTHUR But I don't want a servant.

ELENOR You mean you don't want Sally. Don't be stubborn. You can easily afford it.

GRACE (menacingly) Yes, Arthur, you can easily afford it. And you shouldn't be talking this way in front of the boys, especially Barry. Think of the position it puts him in.

ARTHUR But he'll be gone soon too. He's a grown man. He know how the world works.

BARRY Yes, Mr. Braithewaite.

ARTHUR See. So, I give you all this money, for Sally, to fix the cottage, for Barry's tuition and whatever. What do I get?

ELENOR You'll always be welcome here. This is our family home.

ARTHUR What do you propose? You get it in the summer and I get it in the winter?

ELENOR That is a good idea, Arthur, but not quite what I had in mind.

ARTHUR I think I'd like the summers.

ELENOR Why are you being so obnoxious?

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ARTHUR I was just thinking. Here we are, mother is dead
but three days, her ashes freshly scattered on her beloved
lake, and already you're making plans how to spend my
inheritance. Nobody ever thought about what I would like.
Nobody ever does.

GRACE But Arthur, you have everything you could possibly want.

ARTHUR Except one thing.

ELENOR What's that?

ARTHUR (draws a deep breath) I'd like you out of my life.

ELENOR I'm your sister.

GRACE Arthur!

ARTHUR And I'd like some peace and quiet around here.

ELENOR But Arthur, nobody ever talks to you!

WILL Ah...we have to go fishing or something. (Exeunt Will and Barry)

ARTHUR I'd like not to be reminded twice a week that when I was twelve
and you were six you tied me to a tree, that you could swim
faster than me, that you laughed when I got a fishhook in
my ear and that you were in the army and I wasn't!

ELENOR Have you been going to some T-group to learn assertiveness?
Sixty-year-old man ends frustrated silence. Bites siter.
Grow up!

ARTHUR There's a time in life for changes to be made.

ELENOR Mother would laugh if she could hear you now.

ARTHUR No doubt about that! Right now, in the body of a loon,
she is laughing her head off.

ELENOR You're out of your mind. No wonder Will is such a mixed up kid, with a nut like you for a father.

ARTHUR Is that your best shot?

ELENOR No. I've got a better one. Get out of my house.
(silence)

I don't have to put up with you and your...carrying's on... and sarcasm. Get out of my house. Your wife and your son can stay. But you get out of my house.

ARTHUR (sarcastic) What a way to start breakfast.
Thrown from the ancestral home into the cruel world of undistinguished families. Shamed and humiliated by his own sister. He made his way haltingly to a flat on lower Spadina! Is that it? I hear the old crows whispering... She got the lodge and she won't let him in at all. Can you imagine, not at all! Forced to make his way with ordinary people. Is that your best shot? Well... whose going to pay? How are you going to fix the dock, and refinish the boat, and keep Barry at Yale and Will in videotape? So long, sis, but with an income of \$8,000.00 I think you'll last till Christmas, and then you'll be beating on my door. Beating. And you can take the bus home.

GRACE I'm sure Elenor will be all right, Arthur.

ELENOR I'm not going to take this trashy talk any more. Go now, and take Alexis with you!

ARTHUR No, you go. You go!

ELENOR I will not. This place is mine now.

ARTHUR I refuse.

ELENOR I'll call the police.

GRACE Oh no, the neighbours!

ARTHUR You go!

ELENOR Get out, damn it, get out! You insufferable bastard.
Take your bitch upstairs and get out of my house.
I've listened to your whining for fifty years. I've tried to be nice. But this is it. Get out. Get out. Get out.

GRACE Please, please.

ARTHUR And leave the children here alone with you!

ELENOR You are an obnoxious, seedy, slimy, uncouth, spineless, hypocritical bore.

ARTHUR That's your best shot! So anyhow, get out of my house.

ELENOR What are you talking about?

ARTHUR By lunch. Barry will drive you.

ELENOR You're mad.

ARTHUR It's my house, not yours.

ELENOR What!

ELENOR That's not what the will says.

ARTHUR That was the old will.
(pause)

ELENOR You bastard!

ARTHUR Not to worry. You get the money.

ELENOR What!?

ARTHUR Mother changed her will. She gave the lodge to me, and the money to you. As simple as that. You need the money, right? So you got it! You don't need the lodge. And I've got it.

(ARTHUR) So you pay Sally! Keep her as long as you want.
 You pay Barry's tuition - for as long as you want.
 But get out of my house.

ELENOR She changed the will? Why didn't she tell me?

ARTHUR I told her not to. A nice surprise. Something to cheer
 you up after she's gone. I'm not even a trustee.
 It's yours, for life, and then to Will...for a disco or
 whatever he'd do.

ELENOR Well, then I can pay for the repairs. I will.

ARTHUR Not to my house! Get out.

ELENOR This is perfect.

ARTHUR I think so! Be out by noon.

ELENOR Be serious.

ARTHUR You heard me.

ELENOR Don't be bitter. This really is more fair. You've got
 a job. I need the money. I'm a woman.

ARTHUR Oh yes, the rich woman's version of women's lib.

ELENOR This is perfect. I'll rent the lodge from you. How much?

ARTHUR It's not available.

ELENOR You bastard! I shall buy another. And have to visit
 there whom I like. (She storms off.)
 (Grace picks up dishes and exits quickly to kitchen.
 Arthur sits triumphant at the table in silence.
 Alexis comes downstairs. She takes his hand. He
 smiles proudly and lights fade out)
 (A little Chopin Prelude)

ACT II, Scene iii

(Arthur sits on the verandah, with a drink, looking quite satisfied; Music - Chopin Prelude; Enter Will and Barry)

WILL Ah, father...father...

ARTHUR Will, my boy, sit down, sit down. Well, well, well, these are momentous days. Barry, sit down, sit down, you're not a servant here any longer.

WILL Can we talk to you?

ARTHUR Of course, of course. What can I do for you?

WILL It's about Sally, and Barry. Sally's all upset. She thinks she's fired. She's out in her cabin. She's been crying all afternoon.

ARTHUR She should be happy. No more damn fool tea parties.

BARRY She's worked here all her life, Mr. Braithewaite.

ARTHUR And mother was very fond of her, too!

WILL Nana always promised Sally, and Barry, he could finish school.

ARTHUR Well, I'm sure he can. Can't you Barry?

BARRY Yes sir.

ARTHUR There you go.

WILL He'll need some money. He has to pay his tuition. Nana always paid his tuition.

ARTHUR God rest her soul, she's gone now. Gone to join the Great One as dust in the wind, on Loon Lake.

WILL Father, don't be obtuse.

ARTHUR You sound like your mother.

WILL You've got the money now. I think you're...we're...obliged to honour Nana's promises.

ARTHUR Oh...will he carry me around under the stars and play nooky-nooky on the dock?

BARRY I did what I was told, Mr. Braithewaite.

ARTHUR So have I my boy, so have I, all my life.

BARRY I have to tell the school.

ARTHUR What school? (He drinks with satisfaction)

WILL Yale. You're drunk.

ARTHUR Delirious!

BARRY Mrs. B. promised my mother.

ARTHUR May she rest in peace!

WILL Don't be so stupid.

ARTHUR You want me to dispense a portion of the Braithewaite fortune to the Browns. Why? What do I get for it? Assuming as you say, it's my money now, what do I get for it?

WILL Nana promised.

ARTHUR A fortune like ours was hard won, Will, hard won. And I've done a damn fine job preserving it, if I do say so myself. You don't just give it away. To just anybody. You don't seem to understand the value of money. I'm not just going to give it away because mother, in dotage, used this backwoods brute as a rickshaw!

WILL You're a prick! A first class prick.

BARRY Let's get out of here.

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ARTHUR (sarcastic) Now you know I don't approve of strong language Will dear. Better watch it or I'll disinherit you.
(Will and Barry leave the porch and go into the lodge, centre stage; lights dim on Arthur, still sitting on the verandah chuckling to himself, drinking)

BARRY What am I going to do about my mum? She's going to pieces. It's not fair.

WILL Maybe mother can talk sense to him.

BARRY Your mother can't talk sense to her knitting needles.

WILL She's got some influence.

BARRY (gesturing to verandah) A czar is born! I don't understand why your Nanny gave him the money. She knew he was an asshole.

WILL He's just mad because nobody likes him.
(Elenor descends the stairs carrying two suitcases)

ELENOR There you are! I've been looking all over for you. I need you, right away.

WILL Where are you going?

ELENOR Back to the city.

WILL When did this happen?

ELENOR I am, it would seem, no longer welcome here.

WILL Who says?

ELENOR Your father! Barry, will you take these down to the boat. And you had better pack some clothes for yourself.

WILL What's going on?

ELENOR I am leaving! Will darling, you will always be welcome in my home. And if ever you need something, anything, just call me. I will look after you.

WILL He's throwing you out! But it's your house!

ELENOR Well, so we all thought! But that cretinous swine had mother change her will. He gets the lodge, dear boy, not me. He and that mamiferous strumpet upstairs!

WILL He what?!

ELENOR But never fear, my innocent. The consolation prize is quite grand, really. I get the money!

BARRY That's okay!

ELENOR Mother's money! (Barry picks up suitcases) She changed her will. I get the money, and he gets the lodge. Not what we thought, but I shall buy another, and next summer will be just the same as all the others, but on a different lake, and with a slight change of cast. Barry, take these down to the dock.

WILL Barry doesn't need to go.
(Will tries to make Barry put the bags down)

ELENOR (to Barry) I will be taking your mother with me. She's packing her things now. When you've finished with the bags in my room, you should help her.
(to Will) Will, you can still see Barry. He won't be going back to school till September. He can stay with me on the holidays. You will always be welcome. I don't know whether there will be room for everyone all summer. I doubt I can afford something quite so grand. But you can visit, of course.

WILL Barry's not kicked out. He can stay here.

ELENOR And who will pay his mother? Arthur Braithewaite? He has already let his intentions be known! The man has no sense of honour. If I am called upon to pay the price of family honour, I will do so. Thank God I have the resources. Sally has been so loyal. I wouldn't have it any other way.

WILL He can't throw you out!

ELENOR Perhaps not! But I am leaving, nevertheless.
And I am taking what is mine.
(to Barry) There are more upstairs.
(continuing to Will) I think it is better this way.
I greatly fear your father would bestow undeserved resources
on that tart. Will, you really should worry about your
mother. She's going to be hurt in all this. Badly hurt.
And she's so hopelessly innocent. (enter Sally; she sees
Barry, rushes over and hugs him)

SALLY Praise the Lord. I'm going with Miss Braithewaite. She's
gonna keep me! She's gonna keep me! Thank God there's some
honour left in this family. Thank God. Mr. Braithewaite
would be proud. And she'll pay your schoolin' boy. Just
like Mrs. B. promised. She always promised me that!
So get packin!
(Barry and Will exchange glances)

WILL We'll pay his tuition. That was a family promise.

ELENOR With what? Not with your father's money. With what?

SALLY Oh, Will, it's an answer to all dreams. My boy can finish Yale.

WILL But it's not fair that Aunt Elenor should pay the whole cost.

ELENOR What choice do I have? Will, darling, you can visit. You
can visit. Now hurry along, get the boat loaded. I am
leaving for good. I want to be done with that dreadful man.
(Barry exits with bags and Sally out the back door. As
Barry and Sally go out, Arthur enters from the verandah)

ARTHUR Are you leaving?

ELENOR Don't be cute. Will knows what has happened...Arthur, why
don't you rent the lodge to me? I could have Grace and
the boys as my guests. They don't want to be separated.
And Sally too. You don't like it here. Grace wouldn't mind
if you stayed in the city for the summer. Why don't we
try that? I'd like to be reasonable.

ARTHUR No thanks.

ELENOR (to Will) That's what he said before.
 (to Arthur) You don't even like it here!

ARTHUR I'm going to try it out after I rid it of the rats.
 (Arthur drinks)

ELENOR I can pay a fair price.

ARTHUR Ha! Your credit's no good.

ELENOR Don't be silly. This is ideal. I'll fix the place.

ARTHUR Not interested.

ELENOR How much? Don't bargain with me. I know your tricks.

ARTHUR No free lunch today.

ELENOR Don't be difficult.

ARTHUR You can't afford this place.

ELENOR You're drunk! Of course I can.

ARTHUR Ha! You know what? There's no money.

ELENOR What!?

 (Re-enter Barry - stands watching, listening)

ARTHUR There's no money! Gone! Spent! Eaten! Drunk! Sunk! Wasted!
Lost! Burned! Devalued! Destroyed! Vanished! Nothing!
Kaput! Zippo! Seven trust accounts, four companies,
five trust companies, three accountants, ten lawyers,
eight law suits, two trustees in bankruptcy and an overdraft.
And it's all yours Elenor. Congratulations.

ELENOR You're lying.

ARTHUR Right! I'm lying! Now get out of my house!

ELENOR You're lying. When did mother change her will?

ARTHUR Last week.

ELENOR Last week. Here!

ARTHUR Witnessed by the Pringles.

ELENOR You slime. If there's no money, you tricked her. You did it to get the cottage. She'd never disinherit me.

ARTHUR How could I tell her a thing like that! It would have broken her heart. The most important thing in her life was her rich husband. How could I tell her he was a spendthrift, a gambler and a fool.

ELENOR You got three million dollars when you sold the firm.

ARTHUR Indeed I did. And the bank got two million, nine-hundred and twenty-five thousand off the top for debts. They're not dumb.

ELENOR You're an embezzler!
(Arthur drinks) And a drunk.

ARTHUR I'm as honest and competent as the day is long. And a damn sight better businessman than the old man. Just poor. You're a lazy bitch who's lived off the fat of the land. Well, now it's the seven lean years, Elenor. Maybe you could sell linen in Eatons? Want a reference? They love to hire the recently dispossessed. Keeps the unions away, if you know what I mean.

ELENOR I'm going to report you!
(Elenor rises and storms out the door)

ARTHUR I'll give you the Crown Attorney's phone number. He's a friend of mine. Out by noon! Remember, noon! And a fish hook up your ass, Elenor. Up your ass.
(Barry and Will exchange worried glances)

(Sally enters, rushing as fast as she can, carrying an old carpet bag, and a large picture. She sees Arthur, but not Elenor. She tried to hide the picture. It is a large photo of Jason Braithewaite. She comes to the middle of the room, wanting to leave immediately and obviously not wanting to talk to Arthur)

ARTHUR Down on the dock. She's down on the dock.
(Sally rushes past and exits the other side toward dock. Barry goes after her. Grace comes down the stairs past Elenor; she sees Sally leaving)

GRACE My goodness, what is all the commotion?

ARTHUR It seems Sally is leaving. And Barry too. That's all.

GRACE And Elenor?

ARTHUR The same old thing. Money problems.

WILL (to his mother) Nana changed her will. Father gets the lodge, and Elenor gets the money, but there isn't any. That's what he told her. Elenor was going to take Sally and Barry. But now there's no money. Sally doesn't even know. She's down loading the boat.

GRACE (sweetly) Will, why don't you run down and help them?
Tell them everything is all right. Nobody is leaving today. And not to worry. Your father and I are going to have a little talk. (Will exits quickly)
(to Arthur, sweetly) What's this all about, Arthur?
(awkward pause)

ARTHUR Grace, I don't think we're really happy, do you?

GRACE It's the same as it's always been, Arthur, to me.

ARTHUR Well, that doesn't answer the question, does it? I mean "happy". Fulfilled with each other.

GRACE You're talking like a teenager. We've been married for almost thirty years. It's the way things are.

ARTHUR I take it that you're content. Whatever that means?
And frankly Grace, I never know with you.

GRACE So?

ARTHUR You're making this very difficult.

GRACE Arthur, I never start the difficulties.

ARTHUR Grace, you never start anything...Grace, I'm leaving you.
I want to marry Alexis. I want you to give me a divorce.

GRACE She's fifteen years younger than you are, Arthur.
People will laugh at you.

ARTHUR That's a silly reason for not marrying the woman I love.
Grace, we're stale. That's all. It's nobody's fault.

GRACE You've decided this?

ARTHUR Yes.

GRACE This is the new regime.

ARTHUR Yes.

GRACE Now that your mother is gone?

ARTHUR Yes, it's true. I waited. It would have upset her.

GRACE What about me?

ARTHUR You can't be surprised.

GRACE What about Will? He'll be shocked.

ARTHUR Will's life is full of shocks.

GRACE I hope you don't think that I'll support you. Living with
another woman.

ARTHUR No.

GRACE Does she have money?

ARTHUR No.

GRACE You didn't tell her you were rich, did you? Bring her up here and pretend you were a wealthy man? Forgive me for being cynical, Arthur, but at a time like this I believe the good Lord would forgive me. Is that the attraction? Is that what she sees in you? That you are rich. The poor deluded girl.

ARTHUR I have the lodge. Mother changed her will, so I get the lodge.

GRACE But you can't pay the maintenance on the place.
(pause) Arthur - would you sell the lodge?!

ARTHUR Yes.

GRACE Your mother was right.

ARTHUR About what?

GRACE She said deep down inside you really hated us. The family. Her. Jason. That you never had the balls to rebel against her. "Balls" was her word. Arthur, not mine. Until now.

ARTHUR Mother said that?

GRACE Yes.

ARTHUR Amateur psychology, but very insightful. Well, I'm going to sell it. I have a German buyer. Or a Japanese. I can live on the money quite nicely. Not like you, of course. But I won't be asking you for any money. That's finished.

GRACE But what about your sister, your son? This is their ancestral home. They love the place.

ARTHUR They can buy it from me. Half-a-million.

GRACE That's impossible.

ARTHUR I had to. She has to know the truth.

GRACE Did you tell your mother?

ARTHUR Oh heavens, no. I wouldn't want to hurt her. You always said that.

GRACE But when you had her sign the new will.

ARTHUR What do you mean?

GRACE (with deliberateness) When you had her sign the new will. When you took her to the Pringle's.

ARTHUR (alarmed that she knows about the Pringle's) Of course not. You told me never to tell her. How do you know about the Pringle's?

(Elenor comes down stairs. Grace returns to her most saccharine)

GRACE Oh, Elenor, Arthur and I were just finishing a little chat. You might as well be the first to know. (with great hurt and dignity) Arthur is leaving me. For Alexis. They want to be married.

ELENOR Oh, my dear, sweet Grace. What will we do? How will we live? You must sue. Don't let him get away with it. Really.

GRACE (sweetly) Maybe Mr. O'Dyer could help me.

ELENOR Who's he?

GRACE Arthur knows him.

ELENOR What will become of me? He got the business, and now he's got the lodge. He's done something with all the money. I'm finished.

(Barry and Sally re-enter and stand rather dumbly at the door. The unspoken message is "What's going on? Who's got the money?" They are followed by Will who rushes up to his parents in a confrontation without words.)

ELENOR Barry, there are more bags upstairs. I want to get to the landing before dark. (Barry doesn't move)

ARTHUR Tough luck, Elenor. The hulk recognizes a freeloader when he sees one, you penniless bitch. You're no better than he is.

GRACE (remains calm and sweet as those around her lose tempers)
Sally, I really think it's too late to make the landing by dark. Such a rush. Arthur and I have decided that everyone should stay at least tonight. Be a dear and make some tea for everyone. (Sally hesitates) I'm sure Arthur didn't mean what he said. Do it for me.

SALLY Yes ma'am.

(Sally heads for the kitchen. Alexis comes down the stairs. Sally looks at her with great disgust and rushes past)

ALEXIS (looking at suitcases) Is somebody leaving?

GRACE (sweetly) Oh, I imagine somebody must. Will, your father has something to tell you. Sit down Alexis. I presume you already know. Yes, of course, you must. (Alexis sits)

ARTHUR Yes, well, as you know Will, for some time your mother and I, that is, as you can appreciate, people don't stay in love forever..

GRACE He's leaving me, Will, for Alexis

WILL Mother. (he embraces her)

ARTHUR Yes, that's right. It has nothing to do with you.

ALEXIS You'll be welcome any time.
(Grace pushes Will away. She is still perfectly composed.)

GRACE Alexis, I am not skilled in affairs of this sort. I gather you are, but I value my dignity above all else. And the family name that I have adopted. Do you suppose you could do me one favour at this time?

ALEXIS Mrs. Braithewaite, what is it?

GRACE Sometimes my husband - your husband - speaks precipitously. He says things he doesn't really mean. It is necessary on occasion to take a firm hand with him, if one is able. Unfortunately, especially when he has been drinking. I'm sure you understand.

ALEXIS He doesn't drink with me.

GRACE Well, I suppose then I "trouble" him. It's better this way. For him. With you. But this quarrel with his sister, about the lodge. It seems so unnecessary. Things are being said that should not be. If you understand me.

ALEXIS But it's his now.

GRACE You see it that way, do you?
(Sally re-enters with a tray and the paraphernalia for a modest tea)
I was rather hoping you could moderate this somewhat.

ELENOR Grace, you are so naive!

GRACE It doesn't have to be so unpleasant.

WILL He was going to throw Elenor out. And Sally.

ELENOR And Barry.

GRACE Well, surely that can wait a week or two, till the end of the season.

ARTHUR It's my house.

ALEXIS It is!

GRACE But wouldn't you feel uncomfortable with the both of us here?

ALEXIS Yes.

GRACE It's almost the end of the season. Couldn't we stay till the end of the season?

ALEXIS I don't know anything about that.

ARTHUR Why shouldn't I enjoy my own house?

ELENOR You little gold-digging sexpot. I hope your tits fall off.

ALEXIS It happened. That's all. It happened. We're in love. That's not a crime. I don't think you people know anything about that. We have a right to enjoy it.

GRACE I thought perhaps we might avoid a lot of commotion until the end of the season. I come here every summer. It seems unkind.

ARTHUR You won't suffer, Grace. You won't suffer.

GRACE Sally, why don't you pour? (She does) Will, I have this tape... (which she takes from her purse) I do hope you'll forgive me. I made it with your equipment one afternoon when you were out. Of Nana. I think we should play it.

ARTHUR Oh God, not more of those damn stories.

GRACE Could you put it on the machine?
(Will takes it, puts it in the video console, and rolls the television over to the group)
She wanted to make this message, for the family. She asked me to do it. (Alexis get up to leave) Oh, please stay, Alexis. You will be interested in this.
(Television comes on. We see Cybil)

TAPE/CYBIL Is it on? Is it working?

TAPE/VOICE OF GRACE I think so. Should I get Will? Why don't we wait for Will?

CYBIL/TAPE I don't want Will, I want to leave him out of it. Don't get Will. This is for you to keep, Grace. He's got all those other damn fool stories.

ARTHUR (getting angry, drunk, shouting) Shut up, mother, shut up. I don't have to listen to you anymore. Shut up!

CYBIL/TAPE Have you got the lights right? Turn off that lamp.

ARTHUR Turn off the whole machine.

GRACE (taking one of Alexis' hands - sweetly, of course) This will be one of your problems. He gets this way.
(Alexis looks a little horrified as Arthur gets more violent)

CYBIL/TAPE I want to look my best.

GRACE/TAPE You look fine, Mrs. B.

CYBIL/TAPE But this is television. People will be watching.

ARTHUR You look awful, mother. You look like a ninety-year old witch.

ELENOR She does not!

WILL Father.

CYBIL/TAPE Are you ready?

GRACE/TAPE Ah...I've got it, I see...

CYBIL/TAPE Just turn that little black knob. Damn this cast. I could do it myself, if it weren't for this cast.

GRACE It looks all right, don't you think?

WILL It's fine.

ARTHUR Mother, you pretentious bitch!

GRACE/TAPE There. All set.

CYBIL/TAPE Fix my blanket.

SALLY Poor dear.

ARTHUR (gets up and starts pacing and shouting) I've had it.
I've had it! This is a damn ghost. I'm not listening
to a goddamn ghost. This is crazy. She's dead. Dead.
The lodge is mine!

GRACE/TAPE Do you want the papers?

CYBIL/TAPE No thank you dear. I can remember.

WILL Father, sit down.
(Grace takes Alexis' hand, gives it an encouraging little
squeeze and gestures that she should calm Arthur. Alexis
brings him to his seat as Cybil speaks. Arthur pours
himself another drink and falls into a few moments silence)

CYBIL/TAPE My husband and I...
(Because of Arthur shouting, it is hard to hear, and Grace
turns up the volume significantly)
have always had a special place in our hearts for Loon Lake
Lodge.

ARTHUR The lodge is mine. I earned it. Waiting all these years on
the rich ladies. I earned it.

CYBIL/TAPE We first met on a trip to this lake. We came here on our
honeymoon after the Great War. We have brought our family
here every summer. And we are buried here. I say "we" because
I presume by the time anyone sees this, I too will be
buried here.

ELENOR Oh, mother!

ARTHUR She's an old loon now, flying around out there crowing at the
stars.

CYBIL/TAPE So this place is very dear to me. Jason and I always wanted
it to remain in the family. That was his wish.

ARTHUR It's mine.

WILL You'll sell it to the Germans.

CYBIL/TAPE I always thought those dreadful meetings to read the will were terribly frightening. So impersonal. So that's why I asked Grace to help me make this tape. So I could explain what I've done. Myself. Not some lawyer. Of course, I had the lawyers do all the paperwork. Grace's friend, Mr. O'Dyer was here. He was very nice.
(All parties draw closer around the television)

CYBIL/TAPE In Jason's will he gave me the power to appoint...as they call it... to whomever I chose, the inheritance of our property and resources. It was his wish, and it is mine, that these sums which really are quite handsome should be for the family. When I say for the family, of course I include Sally and Barry who have been so kind to me.

SALLY Thank you, ma'am.

ARTHUR No. No. No.

CYBIL/TAPE And Grace. Who has been like one of our own. She enjoys the lodge more than any other person, I believe. But I'm afraid to say that my son Arthur doesn't really seem to love it the same way, if at all. Perhaps his office responsibilities are too much for him, I don't know.

ARTHUR You old bitch!
(He throws his drink at the television)

CYBIL/TAPE He's just not the man his father was. (Arthur jumps in rage)

ARTHUR He was a drunken, whoring fool. I saved his ass five times and what have I got to show for it?

CYBIL/TAPE It had always been my intention to leave the lodge to my daughter Elenor who has been so loyal, if a little bossy... I hope you don't mind, dearest, there have to be some liberties allowed to the departed...

ARTHUR The lodge is mine. You signed the will.
 (Alexis tries, without success, to restrain Arthur. Grace
 turns the television up a little more)

CYBIL/TAPE ...And the money to my son, Arthur. But it seems to me
 now later in life, especially seeing that Elenor is not
 married, that she needs the money more. After all, Arthur
 still has a job with the firm, even though he sold it
 to the Americans. So I've appointed the funds to Elenor.

ELENOR What funds.

GRACE She didn't know.

CYBIL/TAPE I'm very troubled about the lodge.

ARTHUR It's mine. It's mine. You signed. You signed. At the Pringle's.

CYBIL/TAPE Frankly, I'm afraid Arthur would sell it. To the Arabs or
 somebody like that. That's his business. Selling our country.
 That's what my late husband did as well, of course, but then,
 somehow, it was different. It was more noble then.

ARTHUR No. No. No.

CYBIL/TAPE Arthur has spoken to me about signing another will giving
 the money to Elenor. So I know he won't object to that.
 He thought the lodge then should be his. I'm going to do it
 a little different. I'm going to give the lodge to his
 wife Grace.

ARTHUR Noooooooooooo!

CYBIL/TAPE She'll never sell it. And Arthur will always have the use
 of it. And Will too. It won't be very different than what
 Arthur proposed. But I'll feel better. After all, I'll be
 swimming around in this lake for a long time to come.

ARTHUR Nooooooo!

(He picks up the teapot and is about to throw it at the television. Barry tackles him and Sally catches the teapot. Barry and Arthur fall to the sofa, Arthur wailing...)

ARTHUR No. No. No. I've got the will. I've got another will!

CYBIL/TAPE I'm sure everybody will be just as happy with this new arrangement. And I will be happier. Mr. O'Dyer made up a new will for me which I signed. We had the Pringles over for tea and they were witnesses. They are very nice. I hope I can see them again soon.

ARTHUR No. No. No.

GRACE Don't be rude to your mother, Arthur. She's just about finished.

CYBIL/TAPE I want all of you to know that when my time comes, I will go in peace and contentment, knowing that my family will always be with me here on Loon Lake.

(tape finishes. Will turns off television and tape machine Barry lets Arthur up. He's half crazed)

ARTHUR I've got another will. I've got another will. She signed it the day she died. The day she died.
(He pulls it from his back pocket and starts waving it around)
The lodge is mine. It's mine. I earned it. Goddamn it, I earned it.

GRACE Let me see, dear.
(Arthur waves it in front of her, but won't let her have it)

ARTHUR Oh no, oh no, it's mine. It's mine. I'm free now. I'm free. I don't need you anymore. I don't need to listen anymore.
(He holds the will behind him away from Grace who sits waiting patiently with her hand out, still as sweet as can be. Barry snatches the will from Arthur's hand from behind and gives it to Grace, then holds Arthur)

ARTHUR Let go of me you. Let go. You'll never get back to Yale.
Let go, let go.

GRACE (sweetly to Alexis, as she opens the will) Sometimes you have to be very firm with Arthur. But that's your problem now. (examining the will)
Now, look here, Arthur, this wasn't signed the day she died. It's dated July 20th. She died August 20th. It's her handwriting!
(The will is passed to Sally who examines it, then to Arthur)

SALLY And, ha, ha, she spelled both her names wrong. Both of them. Oh, the Pringles as witnesses again.

ELENOR They've been awfully busy.

ARTHUR It was the day she died, I tell you. (Barry releases him)

GRACE Mrs. Pringle told me that your mother said to her the day you brought her over - in July - she didn't really mean this will. That's why she misspelled her names. She just didn't want to upset you.

ARTHUR (looks at the will) No. No.

GRACE Here, Arthur, look at mine.
(Grace takes it out of her purse. Arthur is looking at the other will in stunned disbelief. Grace hands it to Alexis)
Maybe you could read it to him, dear. The last page has the date.

ALEXIS (quavering voice) It's August 10th.
(Will takes it from her)

WILL That's Nana's signature all right. (turning the pages)
Loon Lake Lodge to Grace Amelia Braithewaite.

ARTHUR (sinking to the floor on his knees in front of Grace)
How will I live? How will I live? I didn't know.

GRACE I'm sure Alexis will find something. Sally, could you clear away the tea? No one will be leaving tonight.

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ARTHUR You should have told mother there was no money.
There is no money for Elenor. You deceived her. Elenor,
she robbed you.

GRACE Nonsense. I've been looking after Elenor all these years.
I still will do that, Arthur. Which is more than she
could expect from you.

ELENOR You? Have been looking after me?

GRACE Well, yes, you see, there hasn't been any money here for
a long time. I've been giving Arthur cheques from my family
trust.

ARTHUR For God's sake Grace!

ELENOR You!

GRACE Well, yes, I hope you don't mind. Barry, could you help
your mother with the dishes.

BARRY Yes ma'am. (exit)

ARTHUR Dear God, Grace, forgive me!

GRACE Alexis dear, could you take him upstairs and clean him up
for supper. Maybe he'll have to sleep. Barry will help you
load the boat in the morning.
(Grace rises and sweeps out of the front room to the kitchen)

ARTHUR Grace. Grace. Grace.
(Will and Elenor follow Grace. Lights dim out with Arthur on
his hands and knees calling out to Grace, and sobbing.
Alexis stands over him, aghast. A few bars of the Moonlight
Sonata.)

ACT II, scene iv

(A light appears in the windows of the main room. It seems at first like dawn. Then it appears in the outside windows of one of the bedrooms. We realize the lodge is on fire. A few whiffs of stage smoke. Someone calls fire.

The Lodge burns. The audience flees the theatre, because the lighting and smoke effects are so realistic. In the foyer ushers sell scripts for the last scene which they are missing.

Flashing red and orange lights behind the scrims give the effect of flames. A scrim across the entire stage is raised from the bottom. Red and orange lights give the appearance of flames throughout the house. Slides of flames, etc. are projected on it.

Sound effects of a roaring fire are heard. We hear Arthur calling "Fire! Fire!" People choking in smoke.

Arthur and Alexis are stumbling down the upper hallway. They can't get down the stairs for the flames. Another separate scrim there creates a blaze in the main room. They go through the bedroom over the porch and Arthur helps Alexis down a ladder or steps there. He goes back into the house.

Will and Barry come running from the direction of the dock. They enter the house from the downstairs to the main room. They can't go upstairs because of the flames. Will grabs his tapes and a portable recorder. Barry runs outside and around to the porch where he meets Alexis. She motions to the house saying Arthur's gone back for the others.

We hear women's screams coming from the house. Barry dashes up the stairs and into the smoke. Will puts his tapes down outside the lodge and climbs the steps after Barry, pushing Alexis roughly aside as he passes.

He can't even get into the burning building. He screams "Mother, mother" We hear more screams from the women and shouts from the men.

Barry emerges from the smoke carrying Arthur. Barry restrains Will from going to attempt to save his mother. He and Will help Arthur down the steps as the porch is consumed in flames.

Alexis follows Barry and Will as they help the gasping Arthur to the dock. She picks up Will's tapes, etc. as he motions to her when they pass by.

The four gather on the dock. The dialogue starts as they limp across the stage in front of the burning building, dark profiles on a glowing scrim. The fire dies down as they watch.

ARTHUR (coughing as he speaks) Dear God, Dear God, I couldn't reach her. I couldn't. I tried. Grace wouldn't come! She wouldn't come with me! She wouldn't let me touch her. Ahhhh! What have I done?

BARRY You tried.

ARTHUR It was awful. I couldn't get near Elenor's room. The flames were right by the door. I could hear her screaming. Screaming.

ALEXIS We all could.

ARTHUR In mother's room.

WILL What about mother? What about mother! You bastard!

ARTHUR I swear! I tried! I tried! She was choking. I tried to pick her up. She hit me! Swung at me! I couldn't! She wouldn't let me.

WILL Oh no, no, no, no, dear God! Mother, dear mum, dear mum. You wouldn't even let him save you! Dear God.
(Will cries. Barry comforts him. They watch in grim silence as the flames die. Sally comes across the stage, slowly, looking old, somewhat crazed. She carries the large portrait of Braithewaite, sr. It is too heavy for her and she pants. As she approaches the dock, Barry helps her with the picture)

ARTHUR Of all the things in that damn building, you would rescue that!

SALLY He was a fine man. (She sits sadly)

ARTHUR Dear God! What have I done? Grace! Grace! Am I such a monster? How could you do this to me?! You bitch! You bitch!

WILL What did you expect?

ARTHUR I didn't want her to die!

WILL What do you care! You've got your little sex pot.

ARTHUR So do you.

BARRY Poor Elenor.

ARTHUR I couldn't reach her! I tried! I tried! I could hear
her screaming.

BARRY She panicked. That's not like her.

ARTHUR I tried!

WILL You set the fire. I know. You wanted to kill them.
(Will becomes hysterical) You set the fire to kill them!
You'd burn the lodge to kill them both.
(Arthur, still coughing, tries to grab Will. Barry
easily separates them)

ARTHUR How dare you, you little faggot! How dare you! Dear God,
Grace! I tried! I tried!

WILL You bastard!

SALLY He didn't burn it down. He didn't burn it! (they all look at her)
I burned it down. I set the fire. I burned it. In the
basement. With the outboard gas. In the woodpile. There
will be no more disgrace here. No more.

WILL Sally!

BARRY Mum!

ARTHUR You!

SALLY What will people say? Leaving your wife for this harlot!

ALEXIS But I love him! I love him. She never did.

SALLY It's not proper. You ruined this family.

ALEXIS Oh my God, this isn't the nineteenth century!

SALLY This grand family. Think of the disgrace. It must be burned.
It must be burned.

(SALLY) Jason said...We must be secret. We must be secret.
A scandal would destroy us all. Our secrets are eternal,
but a scandal would destroy us all.

ARTHUR You bruned the place for that! You crazy old hag. You killed
my wife! My sister! You killed them.

SALLY It was you that was supposed to die, Arthur, not them. You're
the monster, not them. Think of the scandal.

BARRY Mum...

SALLY Jason said...this lodge is our secret cathedral. Here we are
safe...

WILL Sally...

SALLY Our secret splendor, the August sky, the stars shower upon us,
only, here we are powerful, my love, oh so powerful, you and I,
all this embraces us, hear the wind cry for us, the sun shines
for us, the moon is our solitary candle. We are a secret storm.

ALEXIS You and Json!

ARTHUR Sally! The old cock!

SALLY But we can never tell! Never! The world must never know.
You can live here with us. But the world must never know.
Our perfect secret. (Taking up picture of Jason and clutching it)
Jason, Jason, I have sent to ashes all that is secret, the world
will never know, the family will never be disgraced.
(Handing picture to Barry)
Your father, Barry. This is your father. You should be worthy.
You should be worthy.
(Barry and Arthur look at each other stunned, realizing that they
are half brothers. Then Barry looks at Will.)

BARRY Mum. Mum.. Are you all right? Are you okay? I never knew.
Sit down. Sit down.

ALEXIS You killed them.

SALLY (To Alexis) Oh not me! Not me, my dear. It was you.
You killed them!

WILL Did Nana know this?

SALLY She never said. But she knew. She knew.
(Sally gets up, takes the portrait) I'm going to my cabin.
I'm going to my cabin. With Jason. I'll keep Jason. He's mine.
I loved him. I remember. I'll never put them on no tape
machine. My secrets.(To Arthur) You go to your publice disgrace.
I'll stay here. Till the snow comes. At the Lodge. It's
mine now. Only mine.
(She moves slowly off stage. The others stand in stunned
silence. Barry and Arthur eye each other nervously.
Will takes one of the tapes and puts it in his machine
We hear Cybil talking about Jason's cremation and the
scattering of the ashes. Arthur and Alexis exit)

CYBIL/TAPE
WILL

(reading together) The ashes spiralled into the dusk. Up
they went into the stars, sparkling in the last rays of the
sun. Down into the darkness of the forest, across the lake
on the breezes of the night, down to the waves, to the water,
to the spirit. Death frees the living to this magic whirl.
The loons cried and cried.
Winter freezes, but the ashes grow in the spring.
June storms and hurls violence but the ashes steal their power;
summer warms the leaves to the dry yellow of autumn.
September winds tear the leaves free, like the ashes, free to
ride the wind and waves, till winter comes and they sink and
dissolve into permanence.
I am the transparent eyeball in a million pieces, watching
paddlers visit and campers huddle, always in transit, resting
forever, warm with the mother, in the wildness of the north,
in the place where I remember thinking, I am alone.
We are the dead, washed by the waves that numb the fingers of
the paddlers, dried by the winds that chill the bones of the
living. We are the darkness sleeping, the snow that covers;

we are the quiet and the howling, the growing and decaying,
the warm cold; we are the sternness of the forest; together,
ashes and ashes, we are alone together in these lonely lovely
places, forever to remind you.

(Tape ends. A solemn pause. Will changes tape. We hear the
theme music from Moonlight Sonata #1, which fades to a long
forlorn loon cry and thunder. Will and Barry embrace.
Lights out)

End.